THREE PHASES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADIAN SATIRE IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

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Canadian satire in English is examined in terms of its development in three distinct phases, through the works of its most important practitioners in fiction. The first phase, the nineteenth century proselytizers, reflects the most traditional satiric procedure, the condemnation of folly and vice, as it proceeds from strongly-held beliefs in the satires of Thomas McCulloch, Thomas Chandler Haliburton, and James De Mille. The second phase considers the anti-romantic satirists of the first half of the twentieth century, firstly Stephen Leacock, and then Paul Hiebert, Earle Birney, and Robertson Davies, whose satires share the intent of debunking social illusions. In the third and most contemporary phase, the satire of the modern absurdists is exemplified by the novels of Mordecai Richler in their expressions of frustration and compassion.

Within the overall structure these varying approaches are inter-related in terms of their social perspectives and environments, their satiric procedures and standards, and their place in the broader satiric tradition. The study is both a claim for the importance of Canadian satire in English and a microcosm of the evolution of world satire in English.

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This work is for my parents.

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I need not much labour to prove this which I say otherwise than thus, make any solemn protestation, or swear, I think you will believe me without an oath; say at a word, are they fools? I refer it to you, though you be likewise fools and madmen yourselves, and I as mad to ask the question.

-- Robert Burton,
The Anatomy of Melancholy

CHAPTER I

THE PROSELYTIZERS

Satire does not seem to have been accorded its rightful place in Canadian literary history, though its prominence can easily be established by a conspectus of the works of those Canadians who have written it, for they include many of the most important writers this country has produced. While this present study is restricted to prose writers, the satiric spirit has also surfaced in drama, notably in the period since World War II in such plays as Robertson Davies' Eros at Breakfast, as well as in poetry, as F. R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith's The Blasted Pine, An Anthology of Satire, Invective and Disrespectful Verse[1] attests.

This study considers the most important English-Canadian prose satire in three chapters, each chapter corresponding to a distinctive phase in its development. The first chapter studies three nineteenth century proselytizers, Thomas McCulloch, Thomas Haliburton, and James De Mille. In the second chapter Stephen Leacock, and three who followed him in various ways, Paul Hiebert, Earle Birney, and Robertson Davies, are considered in terms of their most prominent characteristic, anti-romanticism. The third chapter finds the most contemporary group of satirists, the absurdists, exemplified by Mordecai Richler, and the study is concluded.

The reasons for the neglect of the Canadian satiric

tradition in prose are understandable, if not excusable. Thomas Chandler Haliburton is remembered as a satirist, but he is not extensively read today (with the exception of the first series of The Clockmaker, published in the New Canadian Library) because like many writers, Pope for example, his work is quite dated for the modern reader, and after The Clockmaker's three series he became very longwinded upon largely forgotten political issues. Leacock, the next renowned Canadian satirist, is remembered chiefly for his humour, and more contemporary writers like Richler are appreciated for their contemporaneity, without a corresponding appreciation of their involvement in a Canadian satiric tradition.

Because satire is not produced in social isolation, it has had to await the development of Canadian social patterns and structures, and the advent of a literary consciousness among its citizens. So it was not until well into the eighteenth century that literary life in the Atlantic provinces, the first centre of Canadian civilization, reached significant, conscious proportions. This was due, firstly, to the unsettled conditions caused by the lengthy agon between Britain and France over North America, and, secondly, to the fact that the cultured classes of the two motherlands were not attracted to settle in the uncertain comforts and pioneer working conditions of the new world. Those settlers who did write most commonly kept journals, or less often, wrote imitative romances. The dearth of literature can also be

attributed to the fact that the population along the eastern Canadian coastline, what little of it there was, tended to shift around quite considerably until it began to stabilize towards the end of the eighteenth century, and even then communication was difficult for geographical reasons.

In such circumstances satire does not flourish. For while (perhaps because) it is iconoclastic, satire, more than any other literary form with the possible exception of the novel, needs a sense of community. Its territory is people. About landscapes, no matter how moving, it has nothing to say, except how they effect characters. Though the eighteenth century was "La Belle Epoque" for satire in England, its effects were not immediately transferable to Canada, because satire cannot be grafted into an unpeopled landscape. The lyric poet or the fabulist can make his art from his mind and environment, but the satirist must work from a particular, usually regionalized, social situation which he can observe and comment upon. As settlement in the region was slow until the latter part of the century, satire does not come into prominence until that time.

While "Acadia" (a stretch of land encompassing present-day New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and parts of Maine and Quebec) was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Britain did not gain its ultimate hegemony until the Peace of Paris in 1763. Halifax was founded under Cornwallis in 1749, but many of his two thousand immigrants did not stay. When, in 1758, a

legislative assembly was formed in Halifax, the community it presided over was small and scattered. However, two years later a number of Puritans migrated from New England, seeking the civil and religious liberty proclaimed by Governor Lawrence -- as well as the fertile, abandoned farms of the Acadians who had been expelled in 1755. From this point onward, successive waves of immigration brought the colony its much needed population base, as well as social, political, and religious diversity -- and a smattering of culture.

In 1773, some 25,000 Highland Scots arrived in one great wave, and it was well over a decade before the Maritimes was to see a more important immigration. This arrived in the persons of 30,000 United Empire Loyalists who settled in the region by 1786, a group so large that in 1784 New Brunswick was given separate colonial status, largely as a result of extensive Loyalist settlement along the Saint John River. Although some of these Loyalists were birds of passage, as a group they did much to raise the cultural tone of their émigré home. Certainly many of them were more cultivated than the rank and file of traders, adventurers, and primary producers of the region, as they tended to be au courant with pre-Revolutionary U. S. literature and the belles-lettrists of Augustan England. Many were university trained, and it was proudly noted that among the first tidal wave of Loyalists, there were some two hundred who could claim Harvard as alma mater.[2]

With the more established literary background of the Loyalists, it is not surprising that some among them turned to literature to record their altered circumstances; nor is it remarkable that satirical verses flowed from the pens of men dispossessed by political conviction. Notable among the Loyalists who produced Tory verse satires both during and following the American War of Independence were Jonathan Odell (1737-1818), New Brunswick's first Provincial Secretary, and Joseph Stansbury (1740-1809), whose lyric "To Cordelia" indicates the melancholy ambivalence with which many regarded their new country.

However, what led to the first important satirical work in prose was neither literary imitation nor political dislocation, but the effects of economic hardship. When long decades of almost uninterrupted war between Britain and France were brought to a close with the resolution of the Napoleonic Wars, the boom years for trading in Maritime forest and farm products also came to an end. The U. S. Embargo Act of 1806 effectively stopped the traditional rivalry with New England for fish and the West Indian trade, and the War of 1812, and successive years of bad harvests, put a great strain on the colony's self-sufficiency. Sharply changed conditions in the colony that Whigs derisively dubbed "Nova Scarcity" produced a loss of morale and an increase in internecine rivalries and squabbles among the colonists -- what Fred Cogswell has called "the conflict between orderly habits of life acquired

in Britain and the British colonies in America, and the shiftless, gambling economy imposed on the emigrants by their new environment."[3] These conditions provided an ideal, even classic, seedbed for satire: that of a relatively homogeneous society undergoing a basic upheaval.

Thomas McCulloch (1776-1843)

The man who appeared on the scene in the 1820's to comment satirically upon the state of the colony was Thomas McCulloch. Born in Scotland, McCulloch studied Arts and Medicine at Glasgow University without taking a degree, then proceeded to divinity school and his ordination as a Presbyterian minister in 1799. After four years of preaching in his native country, McCulloch accepted a colonial ministry in Prince Edward Island and headed there, but was forced to winter in Pictou, N. S., where he stayed 35 years without ever reaching his original destination. In Pictou, where he achieved fame as an educator and cleric, McCulloch was in a position to witness at first hand the moral and spiritual decay of the colonists. His own firm moral position, spirit and industry were unquestionable. He founded the Pictou Academy, the third institution of higher education in the province, and a school of divinity; later, in 1838, he left Pictou to become Dalhousie University's first principal. He was a noted pamphleteer in religious controversies, particularly with the Roman Catholics, and whatever he wrote

seemed to reach a large constituency in a population starved for any writing on local subjects.[4]

McCulloch attempted a number of styles and approaches in his writing, including a historical romance, William and Melville, which bears out Cogswell's remark that, at this time, the "novel was regarded as a vehicle of escape from life, either to the mediaeval past of glamor or terror, or to the sentimental intrigues of a hypothetical aristocracy."[5]

However, in 1821 he was able to merge the purely didactic side of his writing with its entertainingly fictional side. He undertook to mock and castigate the moral and physical stagnation of his fellow colonists through the pages of a weekly newspaper, the Acadian Recorder. He signed himself Mephibosheth Stepsure, Gent., which allowed him a satiric persona that was thoroughly didactic, yet whose thrusts he had neither to defend nor explain (although the secret of his authorship did not last as long as the series of letters ran in the Recorder).[6]

His satirical series The Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure, now known as The Stepsure Letters, ran in the Recorder from 22 December 1821, to 11 May 1822, but were not collected between covers until 1862, almost two decades after his death.

From a historical perspective the first noteworthy thing about these Letters is their style. They were written from a colonial viewpoint, and while the style is British (modelled after Addison and Steele) it had long since passed

from fashion in the mother country. "The continuity between chapters is not arrived at through an over-riding unity of plot, as in the novel proper, but by a continuation of character and tone from chapter to chapter as in the essays of The Spectator."[7]

As is usual in such matters, the colonial imitation was well behind the times in England, but McCulloch's use of an episodic, mannered style is appropriate to his purpose. He employs the leisurely, economical cadences of the great British periodical essayists, but beneath its modest, self-depreciating surface, one soon discovers a morally simple worldview that would be Manichean were it not also melioristic.

Even the name of McCulloch's satiric persona, the narrator Mephibosheth Stepsure, is by implication an oxymoron, and the juxtaposition of opposed names is an appropriate central referent to his black and white social perspective. Mephibosheth is a Biblical figure, whose name means "one who scatters or disperses shame"; the son of King Saul, he was lame in both feet;[8] our narrator, his namesake, is crippled in only one, his right. The point is of course that, although they are lame and faltering, and hardly graceful, his steps along the road of life are sure. "The road of life," pure cliche though it is, is the sort of homely and homiletic phrase that is his natural expression. Fortunately, McCulloch is gifted with a turn of phrase that allow many of his sententiae to sound proverbial without being heavily

cliched. In addition he is a master of asides that dissemble pointed criticism beneath a surface that is innocuous -- if sometimes bland. A good example is: "Amidst the infirmities of age, it is a great comfort to old folks, that, whatever destruction time works in their memory, they never find it affecting their judgment."[9]

It should be remembered that McCulloch is working in a social and satiric context where imagination is a fugitive operation whose existence, like that of all spies and saboteurs, can never be officially recognized. Consequently, Stepsure operates behind the satirist's familiar smokescreen of disclaimers and caveats. He maintains that he is telling the plain, simple, "unvarnished" truth, without artifice or guile. Near the conclusion of his first letter he writes:

> It will not, I know, be very interesting to your readers in general; for they have all seen the like, and heard the like a hundred times before; and as it is no fable but a true story they will not be able to deduce from it any sage moral for their own direction in life. (17)

He could hardly be more ironic, or less ingenuous, and it is a statement that he repeats several times during the series. At one point he writes "Have I not affirmed that it is a true story?" (19); yet he also states that "Both the incredulity and belief of the world are so capricious, that no man who writes for the public is sure of getting justice." (40) This is the typical reverse psychology of the satirist, who makes patent fictions and then complains that no one believes them.[10]

The society about which McCulloch writes is small, loosely centred around a village -- almost pastoral, in fact. Like many another satirist, McCulloch is radically conservative; he looks back to a stable, industrious rural society, and his antipathy to the town (Halifax) is almost defiant in its scorn. While he admits "It has been a time of general calamity among us" (19) it is clear that Stepsure believes the only real complication is a kind of encrustation of error upon the society: the acquiring of credit, fashionable "airs" and accoutrements, in fact everything neoteric that leads to the shirking of duty and neglect of those things that are most useful.

Opposed to the conservative, homespun values of the family farm are the magnetic but, as the reader sees, illusory attractions of Halifax. City fashions and city manners are inimical to industry, and therefore not for poor folk who have farms to run. Many are the examples given of the sorry end that awaits those who transgress the law of nature and try to live above their means and station.

This theme is picked up in the first story of Letter 1, which shows how the good prospects of the Goslings are upset by a visit to Halifax, where Soloman "contracted the habit of running about," and Polly "by seeing the fashions, had learnt to be genteel." (11) This exposure, in a pattern often repeated through the series, sets them upon the crooked road of credit that leads to ruin. A taste of gentility, by

Stepsure's account, can be as addictive as any drug; its maintenance requires the wearing of superfine broadcloths and other tailormade habiliments instead of the more practical homespun. The evil represented by these "store-bought" clothes is, firstly, the use of credit (for small farmers have not the cash for such things), and secondly, the habit of gentility, which herein is a euphemism for idleness, gossip, and the like: "in speaking of them, our old parson used to say, that if you trace a butterfly to its shell, you will find it a maggot." (71)

The moral of McCulloch's satire is that in a colonial society like the one he is writing about, one must succeed largely on one's own industry. Self-reliance, or in the name of the best-selling nineteenth century treatise by Samuel Smiles, Self-Help, is the open sesame key which, in conjunction with Christian faith, unlocks the door to a full and contented life.

McCulloch's didacticism is as apparent as the objects of his satire. His Letters are an exhortation where satiric indirectness is too often marred by pontification; his ideal is a return to the simple, bedrock virtues of the ideal Christian democratic society. Perhaps what the modern reader finds lacking in Stepsure and his epistles (besides a sense of humour broad enough to include their fictive "author") is a more perfect humility. As Robertson Davies has observed in another context "It is not self-help, as defined by Smiles

and his like, which disgusts; it is making a religion of it, and equating success with virtue."[11] Certainly Stepsure does not rouse us with the depth or vitality of his social vision: his ideal civilization would seem to be modelled on the ant kingdom, with a liberal admixture of fundamentalist Christianity.

"Whoever looks at the soil of our township, would say that Nature designed us to be a farming people; and, that every man who gives the ground fair play, will be able to live very snugly." (25) So states Stepsure, who makes it clear that those who transgress this natural rule are in trouble. Laziness, or social pretension, or both, are the cause of all the misery of those who fail. Diverted from the principal task of running their farms by drink and cards and gossip, they (like Tubal Thump the blacksmith) often have too many irons in the fire. "I do not know how it is in Halifax," Stepsure writes, "but, in the country, it is really a great hardship to be a respectable gentleman." (31) He is very observant of the careers of gentleman farmers, and he notes that however much they begin in finery and comfort, they end up ploughing fields in swallowtail coats, with old garments stuffed in their windows because they can't afford glass -- "at the same time keeping out the cold, and proving that those within had once worn clothes." (24)

Some of his most trenchant observations are made about those who waste their time in frivolity:

> I will venture to affirm that there is not another township in the province, where there are so many bargains every day made. Indeed, the greater part of us spend the half of their time, running about expressly for the purpose of getting rich; yet, by some strange fatality, misfortune has fallen heaviest upon those who were most active. (25)

The irony of that "strange fatality" does not disguise the fact that he is laying the blame for misfortune upon the heads of those whom it has visited. McCulloch is proselytizing to the effect that, despite the misfortune that has struck the colony, each man has the materials at hand for his own welfare, should he but apply himself to them.

Stepsure quoted Parson Drone on the subject: "Among other things, I remember, he tried to persuade us, that a person's general habits grow out of his occupation." (22) The emphasis on industry is so central to the Letters that McCulloch stereotypes his characters, not as to "humour" (pace Northrop Frye),[12] but as to occupation. Thus, Miss Sippit is a great hostess of "tea and frolics," Miss Trotabout a peripatetic gossip, Messrs. Holdfast and Catchem successively hold the office of sheriff, Trudge is a pedlar, Tipple an innkeeper, and so on.

While all the characters are types, the righteous ones are given a slightly larger dimension, if not exactly fleshed out. The Rev. Drone may be a bit monotonous in his pulpit perorations, but Stepsure recognizes that he is handicapped by his parishioners, who ignore him, fail to provide for his support, and often prefer do-it-yourself fanaticism, or to

follow false soi-disant prophets like Whinge, Yelpit, and the Rev. Howl: "Every fool among them was a preacher and a converter; and when a decent minister who could put a little sense in them happened to come among them, they soon starved him away." (82) A minister himself, McCulloch is well aware that human weakness also inflicts those who follow his calling, and he is able to amuse his readers at Drone's expense without undermining his essential decency and wisdom. For the others, who set themselves up to preach only after they have failed at everything else, he has only the mildness of his scorn.

Other public officials fare even worse. Sheriff Holdfast runs his jail on the lines of a cheap hotel, and Stepsure receives an invitation from one of his "tenants" to "eat a beef steak with him at half past five." (18) Justice Grub, we hear, "sits in his bed till he mends his trousers" though he "frequently affirms, it is a high honor to be a magistrate." (101) When one of his juries inquires into the mysterious death of a stranger held in jail, it returns the ridiculous verdict of "Died, because he could not live any longer." (45) The Captain of Militia, Hector Shootem, is a useless appendage on the body politic whose only military engagement is the rout of a group of stray pigs. The humour of this situation (underlined by some of McCulloch's best deadpan prose) is found in the all-too-typical fault of those colonists who follow unrealistic and inapplicable models.

Stepsure himself is in the "industrious apprentice" tradition where apparent disadvantages are turned into advantages by adherence to simple virtues, while more favoured but less diligent mortals fare much worse because they do not "stay the course." Stepsure goes into at times piteous detail about how he converted these disadvantages, many of which stem from his physical handicap. He observes that as a result of being neglected by other young people, he became a good penman. Further on occurs this terse summary: "I was no visitor myself, and few came to see me. Here was a large saving of time and expense" (74); and this: "Besides, when I was out of bed, I was generally doing something; and on this account, as well as because in those days I neither smoked nor kept grog in my house, it was supposed that I did not need to be visited." (67) About his eventual success he speaks more lightly: "lame as Mephibosheth Stepsure is, he can go about at large, when some folks who have as many legs as a spider, are obliged to lay them up in the sheriff's." (41)

Stepsure keeps his own counsels, and his nose to the proverbial grindstone, and while he is accorded a certain amount of grudging respect because of his success, he has no wish to sacrifice his modest prosperity to the public respect of townspeople whom he compares to Snout's pigs in general character. "I left public honours" he intones, "to others who were more willing than myself to enjoy them at the expense

of a hungry belly, a starved family, and a burden of debt" (105); besides, "a fool exalted to dignity, is merely a fool more conspicuous." (106) His character is consistent in the matter of composing the letters, for he speaks self-effacingly, not as a public leader, but as a commentator roused to utterance by indignation.

Stepsure is set up as the standard for his society, and a very plain straightforward one it is. Its roots are strongly rural, with a rural sense of community and privacy. Stepsure's stuffy old-mannishness, while imparting a heaviness that tends to drag on the narrative, does give a kind of verisimilitude to his character -- although structurally McCulloch could have used a foil to play off whimsy and lightness against it.

As is often the case with standards, diversions from it are more interesting than the real thing. Certainly, when Stepsure writes the story of his own rise in life (Letters 8 through 13) the proselytizing satire that distinguishes the first seven letters is largely missing from his essentially hackneyed polemic. Were it not for flashes of humour in the religious extremes of the Whinges or in the foray of that backwoods Quixote, Captain Shootem, against Snout's pigs, the middle section of the book would be tedious.

When giving biographical details of his narrator, McCulloch lacks the conciseness and precision that marks his critiques. The reader finds out more than he probably cares

to know about Stepsure's marriage, especially since it is singularly lacking in courtship. Again, their virtues are hardly so revealing as the vices of their neighbours such as Peter Pumpkin's daughters, "noted bundlers" who spend the night with gentlemen, separated only by a bundling board.

What effect these letters had on Nova Scotia is hard to say, although it was certainly positive. Their influence on Haliburton is arguable only to extent, and their fame ranged far enough afield that Blackwood of the Edinburgh Magazine offered McCulloch 75 pounds for the copyright, which he refused, as well as another offer to write at 10 or 15 guineas the sheet.[13] Of their effect on his fellow colonists, we have only the testimony of his son, William, in his Life of Thomas McCulloch:

> So true to fact were they that in almost every part of the country the different characters were supposed to be recognized. No little indignation was expressed by those who thought themselves caricatured, and many more were the efforts made to discover the audacious slanderer. A gentleman describing the effect of those letters in his own neighborhood said 'We looked with great anxiety for the arrival of the "Recorder," and on its receipt used to assemble in the shop of Mr. ____ to hear "Stepsure" read, and pick out the characters, and comment on their foibles, quite sure that they and the writer were among ourselves. Great was often the anger expressed, and threats uttered against the author if they could discover him.'[14]

Stepsure's virtues are basically pioneer virtues, and repetition soon sets in as invention flags. But the repetition is that of the preacher or elementary school teacher (and McCulloch was something of both) driving home his simple

truths. It is also attributable to his simple architectonics: his Letters were written for serial publication in a weekly newspaper and, despite Blackwood's offer, were not collected for nearly two decades after his death in 1843. Lacking any real modulation of voice, and a structure flexible enough to support the reader's interest over their full length, they are still best read in several sittings.

McCulloch's contemporary critic, "Censor", (part of whose debate in print with McCulloch is appended to the New Canadian Library edition of the Letters), is correct when he complains of his "wordiness of diction connected, as it was, with a paucity of incidents and characters." (132) McCulloch's defence is in the "vir bonus" tradition of satire: "It is my misfortune to be a plain man; and my mistake to have told a plain story to plain people in plain terms." (137) But he often expounds at great length what could be better expressed in an apothegm along the lines of Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanack, which was probably his greatest North American influence.

At the same time as we recognize his structural failures, his unity and integrity in presentation must be acknowledged. Frye notes that "McCulloch is the founder of a genuine Canadian humour: that is, of the humour which is based on a vision of society and is not merely a series of wisecracks on a single theme."[15] This singleness of theme, based on a vision of society, adequately defines his humour

as satire, and it is hard to understand why Frye refrains from saying so. However, if one interposes "satire" for "humour" in another of his observations, the place of McCulloch as Canadian satire's founding father is clear: "The tone of his [satire], quiet, observant, deeply conservative in a human sense, has been the prevailing tone of Canadian [satire] ever since."[16]

But, overall, the best summary of this work's relevance to the modern reader is probably this crusty remark of Ezra Pound: "Even this pother about gods reminds one that something is worth while. Satire reminds one that certain things are not worth while. It draws one to consider time wasted."[17]

Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796-1865)

> "Do you see them 'are country girls there'," said Mr. Slick, "how they are tricked out in silks, and touched off with lace and ribbon to the nines, a-mincin' along with parasols in their hands, as if they were afeerd the sun would melt them like wax, or take the colour out of their face like a printed cotton blind? Well, that's jist the ruin of this country. It ain't poverty the blue-noses have to fear -- for that they needn't know, without they choose to make acquaintance with it -- but it's gentility."[18]

This passage, written by Thomas Chandler Haliburton, sounds very like a lecture by Mr. McCulloch's Stepsure. The subject and tone are similar to McCulloch's manner, but the speaker's voice is different: it is more exaggerated, more consciously a "dialect." It is an example of McCulloch's

influence upon a writer whose success far surpassed his own local fame as a satirist, and an illustration of how Haliburton departed from the popular local style of periodical satire, of which the Principal of Pictou Academy was the most successful exponent. Sam Slick, the speaker here, is talking at a greater distance from his subjects than Stepsure, who would likely have named the girls and given something of their background. As an outside observer of the society he is living in, he uses them as examples which his fanciful imagination can expand and enlarge upon.

Haliburton's enlargement of local issues was so successful, and his choice of Sam Slick the clock pedlar was so felicitous, that his writings had an international significance and readership that only Leacock has approached since; for a decade his Sam Slick rivalled Dickens' Sam Weller in popularity in London;[19] copies of The Clockmaker were found everywhere, from isolated frontier cabins west of the Mississippi to a place of honour in the library of Bismarck[20] -- for it was translated into German as early as 1840-42.[21] Haliburton was the first satirist with an international perspective, although the focus was kept upon Nova Scotia, and the pose of objectivity negligently maintained. J. D. Logan has written that during his lifetime, "both the people and the intellectual leaders in British North America, in the United States, and in England were thinking parochially. Haliburton thought for them in continents."[22] His satire

did not, like McCulloch's, emanate from a crusading social conscience, which would have produced a lot of jibes at the neighbours: rather, in Sam Slick we discover the product of a political consciousness and philosophy that, despite its faults, gives Haliburton's best satirical pieces a cohesiveness and breadth that was fresh and innovative for their time. Haliburton, in The Clockmaker, is the epitome of the proselytizing satirist in Canadian letters.

It has been claimed that "Of the many possible topics of satire the pre-eminent one is politics."[23] While the case for this statement depends upon the closeness of one's definition of politics, it finds unqualified support in Haliburton's life and work, which in expression if not in theme transcended his firmly-held high Tory views. McCulloch's concerns were local to the point of insularity, but Haliburton, with the audacity and self-assurance of his own great fictional creation, made of Nova Scotia a forum for his international views, and a platform for his synthetic yet vital Sam Slick.

The development of Haliburton's thought is relatively easy to trace. He was born into a respected Windsor, Nova Scotia, family with New England and Scottish connections grafted onto its English trunk. His successive careers as lawyer, assemblyman, judge of the Court of Inferior Pleas, and Supreme Court Judge, fixed the opinions that he would so staunchly, if with diminishing success after his first great stroke with The Clockmaker, urge upon his compatriots.

Between 1825 and 1860 he wrote and published 15 books that maintain a didactic consistency of political tenor, long after his Old School Tory principles had become an anachronism even in the colonies. As a lawyer he was renowned as an orator and defender of the public weal, and was even somewhat of a radical as a constitutional critic. As a judge his decisions "show competence and a rigid adherence to principle, but no remarkable insights into the workings of the law,"[24] and he frequently demonstrated a probably misplaced levity, as in the famous anecdote when, while adjudicating a case upon the bench, he was petitioned by a member of the jury to be released from his duty because of a severe itch, and ordered the clerk to "Scratch that man" to the amusement of the court.[25] R. P. Baker has claimed that "at any moment his professional decorum was likely to be usurped by the buffoonery of a schoolboy."[26] His writing career, while giving freer play to his wit than he was permitted on the bench, is thematically continuous with his political concerns.

Politics was an all-absorbing subject for Haliburton, and he felt great concern over the colonial situation. He was convinced that the colonies were too young and too weak to seriously consider independence from mother England, (for whom the nonelective colonial Legislative Council stood in loco parentis), so he was against the popular sentiment favoring responsible government; besides, he was a monarchist, for whom republicanism was an aberration. Like Sir John A.

MacDonald, a British subject (and a Tory) he was born, and so he died. But as responsible government was won in Nova Scotia (the first British colony so enfranchised) in 1848 -- hardly more than a decade after his meteoric success with The Clockmaker -- he was fighting a rearguard action most of his political life.

While he regarded political independence as the sheerest folly, Haliburton did everything in his power to urge his fellow colonists to a personal independence of spirit, and an economic independence of well-planned industry, through the concentrated development of the colony's natural advantages, which he never ceased to laud, and through the development of transportation systems to exploit international markets.

His concern that the colonists keep an international perspective was ably expressed in a speech by Joseph Howe, his friend and sometime adversary who "raised journalism to the dignity of literature"[27] through his paper The Novascotian. In 1834 The Novascotian began publishing Haliburton's anonymous serial, "Recollections of Nova Scotia"; a year later, because of the great demand, Howe published an expanded collection of the "Recollections" as the first edition of The Clockmaker; or, the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick, of Slickville. At this point, Howe was saying some of the same things directly:

> "Sir, I trust that those who hear me will be disposed to ask themselves not what exists in England under circumstances very different from ours; not what exists in republican America, created out of a state of things which is not

> likely to be forced on us; but what is required by . . . Nova Scotia under the circumstances in which we are placed."[28]

With these words of Howe we have every reason to believe Haliburton concurred.

Haliburton felt that Nova Scotians had much to work with. "I never seed or heerd tell of a country that had so many natural privileges as this,"[29] says Sam Slick, and he lists harbours, minerals, and fish to illustrate his point. The reason for the colony's lack of progress he traces to those bugaboos (familiar to any reader of McCulloch) of laziness and conceit. "You've sowed pride and reaped poverty," (C, 76) says Sam:

> "Bluenoses have no motion in 'em, no enterprise, no spirit, and if any critter shows any symptoms of activity, they say he is a man of no judgment, he's speculative, he's a schemer, in short, he's mad. They vegetate like a lettuce plant in a scarce garden -- they grow tall and spindlin', run to seed right off, grow as bitter as gall, and die." (C, 50)

Sam's criticisms are well distributed throughout colonial society. He blames the legislators in Halifax for a lack of leadership: "They don't encourage internal improvement, nor the investment of capital in the country; and the result is apathy, inaction and poverty." (C, 73) Simultaneously he says that if his advice is followed (especially as regards building a railroad and opening up steamship routes) he will take credit as "the chap that fixed a Yankee handle on to a Halifax blade." (C, 79) He is constantly throwing in the faces of the "Bluenoses" their conspicuous

failure as contrasted with Yankee progress -- and, as always, he gives a reason: "[here] it's all talk and no work. Now with us it's all work and no talk" (C, 13) -- although Sam himself is hardly a glowing example of this virtue.

As a pedlar, Sam has found that a way with words is an occupational necessity; he makes his money through his knowledge of "human natur'", and his use of "soft sawder", a clever appeal to nonessentials, preys on the householder's fear of missing a bargain, particularly if a neighbour will get it otherwise. "The road to the head lies through the heart" (C2, 136) is his simple premise, and he uses it to get to men through their women:

> "I jist soft sawder the women. It ain't every man will let you tickle him; and if you do, he'll make faces at you enough to frighten you into fits. But tickle his wife, and it's electrical; he'll laugh like anythin'. They are the forred wheels; start them, and the hind ones foller, of course." (C2, 135)

Sam is representative of the explosive, wide-ranging North American life-force, and his style of humour and satire is consequently turbulent, surprising, and eclectic. His use of humour as such is not pertinent here, except to note that he frequently indulges in comic invention for its own sake, which McCulloch never does. As A. H. O'Brien has remarked of Haliburton: "In style he is somewhat diffuse, and occasionally careless. He appears at his best in conversational passages. In ordinary narrative he is sometimes dull, and frequently prosy."[30] Fortunately, most of the conversation belongs to Sam, and at his best he makes good use of it.

The Squire, his frequent companion and Boswell, claims that "He has some humour, much anecdote and great originality; he is in short, quite a character." (C2, 131) This description is accurate, except that his "great originality" is exaggerated.

It has been demonstrated by V. L. O. Chittick that Sam comes from a long line of fictional Yankee tinkers, most mediately from Seba Smith's "Major Jack Downing" of Portland, Maine; he also derives from southern and western American types like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett.[31] For his local application, a number of serial letters in the local press must be conceded influence, most prominently McCulloch's. Sam bears a close relationship (and one, I believe, heretofore unnoticed) with Trudge the pedlar, a very minor character in The Stepsure Letters who vends opinions with his goods -- and as with Sam Slick, the rule to follow is caveat emptor. "I must confess," remarks Stepsure "that when Trudge told me the news, I had some misgivings about its truth, both because pedlars are privileged talkers, and also because when he was speaking about the pension, he was persuading my spouse to purchase a great bargain of a shawl, which would cost her only ten dollars."[32] This demonstrates the interesting contrast between the two satiric points of view: McCulloch's Stepsure plays airon to Haliburton's alazon, Sam Slick. Chittick, Haliburton's most comprehensive critic, calls Sam "a composite figure made up of the diverse characteristics

of two familiar regional types, of nondescript accomplishments and adventures, and of Haliburton's private beliefs in politics and every-day affairs in general";[33] what is most important about him as a satirist is not the derivation of his characteristics, but how he expresses them and to what end. While he is derivative in character and dialect, Sam Slick is sui generis as regards the combination and application of these traits. Though hardly an "industrious apprentice," (for he is hardly honest), Sam is an underdog and an outsider, whose criticisms are accepted only because of their pertinence, and the vigour with which they are expressed, and the "soft sawder" that makes his bitter medicine palatable.

His voice, then, is an extravagant instrument, as it must be to call attention to a society in which he is an interloper and, in effect, a parasite, both nationally and socially. He claims the satirist's traditional neutrality "As I don't belong to the country, and don't care a snap of my finger for either [side], I suppose I can judge better than any man in it" (C, 83) but it is his speech and imagery rather than the justice of his observations that gets the attention of the reader. This was the great irony of Haliburton's life, that what he said was largely criticized or ignored, while the character he invented to say it made him internationally famous.

Although his creator perhaps preferred to ignore the fact, it was the packed and motley dialect of Sam Slick that

held his readers' interest. As Chittick has noted: "It would be hard to find another writer who expresses his view of life with such a debt as Haliburton to the farm, the wharf, the kitchen, and Noah's ark in general."[34] Typical of his style is this description of a member of a religious seqt:

> "He was as thin as a whippin' post. His skin looked like a blown bladder arter some of the air had leaked out, kinder wrinkled and rumpled like, and his eye as dim as a lamp that's livin' on a short allowance of ile. He put me in mind of a pair of kitchen tongs, all legs, shaft, and head, and no belly; a real gander-gutted lookin' critter, as holler as a bamboo walkin' cane, and twice as yaller. He actilly looked as if he had been picked off a rack at sea, and dragged through a gimlet-hole. He was a lawyer. Thinks I, the Lord a massy on your clients, you hungry, half-starved lookin' critter you, you'll eat 'em up alive as sure as the Lord made Moses. You are just the chap to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, tank, shank, and flank, all at a gulp." (C, 80)

Sam's language is turbulent and vibrant, even Rabelaisian in its cascading pastiches of the Yankee "down-easter" and the Western "ring-tailed roarer"; in tone always sforzando, it operates in an exaggerated verisimilitude that plunders language for striking phrases of a fanciful "North American dialect." Sam says "pulled foot" instead of "ran"; he claims that mosquitoes make people scratch "as an Irishman does his head, when he's in sarch of a lie." (C, 69) He moralizes: "If a lawyer takes to cantin', it's like the fox preachin' to the geese; he'll eat up his whole congregation." (C, 64) He creates words as he goes: some of his neologisms are portmanteau words; others, vaguer in sense and derivation, are "mere outlandish vocables, having no meaning."[35] He uses

the hoariest devices to create his amusement: oddly colloquial descriptions and metaphors, double entendres, puns ("to pelt the governor-general with eggs . . . is an attempt to throw off the yoke").[36]

His linguistic eccentricities are put to satiric use in his backwoods "flyting," and they are emphasized by the Squire's reaction to them. One reason for Sam Slick's success is that he has a foil in the Squire, something that Stepsure conspicuously lacks. The Squire (identified in The Attache as "Thomas Poker, Esquire, a native of Nova Scotia and a retired member of the Provincial bar"[37]) represents the reader's interests and reactions, and has the effect of balancing and contrasting with the dynamic Yankee, Sam Slick. As William Walsh has noted, "The considerable energy of the short pieces in The Clockmaker is generated by the friction between the grand Augustan idiom of the narrator and the rough texture of Sam's homely dialect."[38]

Unfortunately, in the books succeeding The Clockmaker, Sam dominates the dialogue such that it becomes a monologue with interruptions, and as the balancing effect of the Squire is lost, so is much of the point of the work. Without a supporting cast, Sam is unable to maintain the artful indirectness of his satire. To this we may attribute a loss of artistic control by Haliburton. If, as John Stuart Mill has claimed, the artist is not heard but overheard, then a too plain didacticism is artistically undermining; but this

was Haliburton's great flaw -- "so much was he the preacher that he was never able to stay long with indirect methods of instruction."[39] But in The Clockmaker, Sam is a marvellous instrument of instruction. Criticism and opinion flow from him endlessly; it would be hard to find or imagine a more opinionated figure in all literature. Sam pontificates on everything, from local customs, ("it's no use to make fences unless the land is cultivated" (C, 73)); to how to handle women as you would horses: ("Encourage the timid ones, be gentle and steady with the fractious, but lather the sulky ones like blazes" (C, 40-41)); to British colonial policy.

On this last issue he was especially determined. He wrote A Reply to the Report of the Earl of Durham on the issue of responsible government, and throughout the Sam Slick books the issue is frequently discussed. As a student of history, Haliburton could foresee a repetition of the American experience vis-a-vis Canada and the British Colonial Office. "So far, there had been only palliatives in the management of the colony, but that could not subsist forever. England had lost New England exactly on account of, if not real mismanagement, at least on account of lack of understanding how to govern that colony."[40] While like all true Tories Haliburton supported the oligarchy in power, he felt quite justified in questioning its policies and philosophies. But this critical spirit by no means drove him into the camp of the constitutional reformers. He preferred to agitate for

closer links with England to solve the colonial miseries; in particular he solicited responsible positions in British government for colonists. Believing that a weakening of the British ties would lead to absorption by the ambitious nation to the south, Haliburton supported a revitalization and restructuring of the Colonial Office, and a free trade policy within the Empire -- which would stimulate the building of railways, bridges, and steamships to re-establish Nova Scotia on a firmer economic base.

The fact that Sam is a pedlar is not merely incidental, for as a successful trader the Yankee points up the lack of a native spirit of entrepreneurship in a country whose dependence on importation is such that "even their horse shoes and the nails for the coffins came from the Mother Country."[41] Though not above a little sharp business practice, Sam gives the colonists free advice that more than replaces whatever he personally has made through their gullibility. He holds the opinion that satire is needed to rouse the torpid colonists.

> "When reason fails to convince, there's nothin' left but ridicule. If they have no ambition, apply to their feelings, clap a blister on their pride, and it will do the business. It's like a-puttin' ginger under a horse's tail; it makes him carry up real handsum, I tell you." (C, 53)

The talkative Clockmaker is an embodiment of political intransigency as revealed in the overweening self-confidence and boastful, aggressive manner of the Yankee "mobocrat." He

habitually expresses himself in chauvinistic rodomontade of which "I guess we are the greatest nation on the face of the airth, and the most enlightened too," (C, 24) and "The British can whip all the world, and we can whip the British," (C, 48) are fairly mild examples. His friend the Squire noted that "it was a striking peculiarity of the Clockmaker's that he never dwelt long upon anything that was not the subject of a national boast." (C2, 173) His boasting could carry to ridiculous extremes:

> "I guess," said the Clockmaker, "we know more of Nova Scotia than the Bluenoses themselves do. The Yankees see further ahead than most folks; they can e'enamost see round t'other side of a thing; indeed, some of them have hurt their eyes by it, and sometimes I think that's the reason such a sight of them wear spectacles." (C, 28)

Haliburton did not like the hustling, expansionist spirit he saw in the United States, whose Congress contained many ambitious continentalists of the "manifest destiny" stripe, nor did he trust its democratic "mobocracy" where factional interests corrupt democratic principles. He did admire American industry and its sense of confidence, and he seems to have preferred the American model to dull, formal England, but he was no republican and was careful to show both sides of the American coin. He was, in fact, a perfect example of Arthur L. Phelps' definition of a Canadian: "one who is increasingly aware of being American in the continental sense without being American in the national sense."[42]

The subtlety of Haliburton's creation becomes evident

upon consideration of Sam's relation to his own country, and in his portrayal of it to Canadians. If Sam had been a critical Canadian pedlar, his satires would not have made the appeal to national pride that, as an outsider, he rouses. If he were simply a travelling dilettante, or a European travel writer (a group Haliburton detested), he could not mount a credible urgency behind his opinions and exhortations. But as an American working in Canada he has a plausible knowledge and broad experience of two distinct North American societies, and can represent America and Americans, both consciously and unconsciously, to Canadians. Additionally, he can cloak himself in dignified impartiality as Haliburton never could: "As I don't belong to the country, and don't care a snap of my finger for either [side], I suppose I can judge better than any man in it." (C, 83) There is also a question of propriety: Sam Slick, as a Yankee, was free to make criticisms about the colonial administration on behalf of the colonies with more license than would be proper for Haliburton, if he spoke directly; and, as an outsider, Sam can use scorn to great effect.

Behind Sam's criticisms and boasts, Haliburton allows the threat from America to be clearly seen. The takeover will happen because the colonists are idle:

> "I have often been amazed," said the Clockmaker, "when travelling among the Canadians, to see the curious critters they be. They leave the marketin' to the women and the business to their notaries, the care of the souls to their priests,

> and of their bodies to the doctors, and resarve only frolickin', dancin', singin', fiddlin', and gasconadin', to themselves. They are as merry as crickets, and happy as the day is long. They don't care a straw how the world jogs, who's up or who's down, who reigns or who is deposed." (C2, 229)

And because the Americans are ambitious continentalists: he compares the United States to "a great vortex" -- "The small crafts are sucked in, and whirl round and round like a squirrel in a cage -- they'll never come out." (C, 45) The threat represented by the Clockmaker is accentuated by his benevolent, matter-of-fact jingoism -- as in his remedy for dealing with the slothful colonists:

> "The remedy," said Mr. Slick, "is at hand; it is already workin' its own cure. The colonists must recede before our free and enlightened citizens, like the Indians; our folks will buy them out, and they must give place to a more intelligent and ac-tive people. They must go to the lands of Labrador, or be located back of Canada; they can hold on there a few years, until the wave of civilization reaches them, and then they must move again as the savages do. It is decreed; I hear the bugle of destiny a-soundin' of their retreat, as plain as anything. Congress will give them a concession of land, if they petition, away to Alleghany's backside territory, and grant them relief for a few years; for we are out of debt, and don't know what to do with our surplus revenue." (C, 51)

The idea of the U. S. Congress granting Canadians "reserves" on low grade Canadian and American land is shocking, ironic (for that is what Canadians and Americans have done with their true native peoples, the Indians), and very clever as political propaganda against republicanism. It adds an image to Sam's character that has been one element

of Canadian/American relations almost from the beginning: the image of ambitious American wheeler-dealers who see Canada in terms of what it can do for them. Sam's friend Hopewell is delineating a type when he says of the Clockmaker, "He is fitted for a trader and nothing else. He looks upon politics as he does upon his traffic in clocks, rather as profitable to himself than beneficial to others."[43]

The etymology of his name indicates the same warning -- one which Sam personifies -- and is a kind of satire on the satirist, who is part of the problem which he is always "solving":

> The name of Sam Slick is intended to indicate directly a certain type of character; for the name "Slick" is but a Yankee vulgarization of the adjective "sleek," which acquired a moral connotation and meant the ability, in business dealings, to gain profit by sharp perception of how to take advantage of another person less quick-witted.[44]

That Sam is from "Slickville, Onion County, Connecticut," (C2, 132) also implies something generalized about Yankee character and methods of trade. It is odd to have to note here that this theme or image has not found another major satiric expression in our literature.

The two complementary facets of Sam as a satirist are cleverly unified: his criticisms are really an encouragement, and his boasts of his "free and enlightened" countrymen are really a warning. Haliburton uses Sam to warn his fellow Canadians (many of whom, at this period, were emigrating to the United States) that the differences found in living south

of the border are not all improvements. Sam's character is subtly distinguished from the typical Canadian's self-conception, the implication being that Americans are this way, and we are not. For Sam is frequently vulgar (he has one prolonged talk with a young lady that depends wholly on a double entendre on "making water"); he is openly racist (he makes many references to a Negro body-odour; in The Attache he has an "odoriferous nigger" servant named Jube Japan, off whose head he likes to shoot apples with a pistol -- while Nova Scotia was not without its own racism, the colonists would doubtless be shocked at such ostentatious racial degradation);[45] and he is a master of sharp practices that, while successful, are not quite honest. As E. A. Baker has observed in his Introduction to The Clockmaker, "Sam Slick is a butt for satire as well as a mouthpiece, for in his person the author strikes obliquely at the 'free and enlightened' citizen of the United States."[46] The warning Haliburton embodies in this "free and enlightened" person is clear: Canadians should recognize their fundamental differences with Americans as well as their fundamental sympathies, and should not allow the latter to lead them into rashly uncritical assumption of a model.

It is interesting that the change which occurs in Sam in the volumes succeeding The Clockmaker (The Attache; or, Sam Slick in England, First Series 1843, Second Series 1844; Sam Slick's Wise Saws and Modern Instances; or, What he Said,

Did, or Invented, 1853; Nature and Human Nature, 1855) is not only a change from the practical, pointed, and local, to the theoretical, obtuse, and diffuse, as politics completely absorbs him, but Sam's politics change as well. Beginning as early as the second series of The Clockmaker, he exhibits some anti-republican views that do not accord with his basic American chauvinism. He is still a mouthpiece, but a mouthpiece that has lost focus and logical consistency. "I do believe arter all," says I, "this universal suffrage will make universal fools of us all. It ain't one man in a thousand knows how to choose a horse, much less a member." (C2, 142) He also admits "We find among us the greatest democrats are the greatest tyrants." (C2, 164) This is not credible as the view of such an ardent Yankee patriot as Mr. Slick, and obviously represents the sentiments of Haliburton, who has Sam also advise the colonists to "Make no organic changes." (C2, 164)

Most of the Clockmaker's jibes are based on the character of the "Bluenoses," but his political criticisms are based on his experience in his own country, and serve as a warning to Canadians. He contrasts the pious, confident public messages of President Madison with his country's virtual bankruptcy, and its policy of aggression against Canada, Mexico, and England. His disaffection with politics is largely a disaffection with American politics, though he does not go so far out of character as to openly say so. He

also subtly conveys his own essential conservatism by his cynicism about politicians and political changes. "I wonder if folks will ever larn that politics are the seed mentioned in Scriptur' that fell by the roadside, and the fowls came and picked them up. They don't benefit the farmer, but they feed them hungry birds, the party leaders." (C2, 152)

It is the double edge of Sam's satire that is missed most when, in the volumes that follow The Clockmaker, Haliburton increasingly adopts a topical narrowness and loquacious intransigency that neither becomes him nor aids his cause, which is the reintegration of colonial participation in the Empire, to "establish a Zollverein of autonomous Anglo-Saxon nations."[47] While he was still to publish some of his best prose (notably in The Old Judge; or, Life in a Colony, 1849 -- where "Sam Slick" was recast on a more lifelike scale as "Stephen Richardson"), his satire, once so keen and precise, became a sort of bloated bladder, full of spite, which was wielded indiscriminately. From an apt and vigorous synthesis of "American" characteristics, the Clockmaker becomes "a promiscuity of moral and intellectual qualities."[48] Haliburton exchanges his satirist's scalpel for a bludgeon, making Sam and his companion Hopewell into spokesmen for ideas instead of characters. As Robert L. McDougall has noted: "So much was [Haliburton] the preacher that he was never able to stay long with indirect methods of instruction."[49] As his creator's pedagogical side dominates his writing, the

delicate balance between amusement and instruction is lost from Sam's satires, which degenerate into a "comic" manner that "soft sawders" the turgid speculations and wearisomely meticulous reminiscences of Justice Haliburton, who himself has become something like a caricature of the choleric Old Tory.

The end of Haliburton's best satire comes as early as the end of the first series of The Clockmaker; thereafter, he went into a long and public (for he did not lack for publishers) period of decline, pouring out lay sermons upon any subject as if his knowledge and insight were endless.

The following revealing statement appears in the Introduction to The Attache: "It is very contemptuous to say of a man, that he has but one idea, but it is the highest meed of praise that can be bestowed on a book. A man, who writes thus, can write for ever."[50] While it must be granted that an artist has the tendency to portray the world as a monad, by the union of his materials around a theme, with the advantage of hindsight we can see this as a lucid statement of Haliburton's fundamental mistake in the manner in which he continued (one might say prolonged) the Sam Slick series. For if a writer has but one idea, it is incumbent upon him to give an artistically modulated expression of his theme, rather than push it, ad nauseum, as did Haliburton.

By The Clockmaker's third series, Sam is a garrulous old bore, as comfortable in his role as any stage Irishman,

and as oblivious to the patience of his audience as any filibustering politician. As a satirist, he is a dead issue. But it is not the prolixity as much as the vapid insincerity of Haliburton's racontes in the ensuing Sam Slick books that is so disturbing to the reader. Chittick is of the opinion that popularity and fame had a pernicious effect on Haliburton's writing, as it seems to have led him to believe that his readers would follow him at any length upon any subject. Certainly he wrote too much in the same vein, and changes of venue to Europe and America merely emphasized Sam's aimlessness. Indeed, Haliburton becomes so careless in employing his mouthpieces that he occasionally puts Sam's "Yankee" dialect into the mouth of the Squire.[51]

As for the amusement value of this later work, Professor Felton of Harvard, probably Haliburton's harshest critic of his time, was not overstating the case of most of these narratives when he observed of one from The Attache that "the coarsest and broadest laugher would recall it without the slightest peril to his gravity."[52]

Generally unremarkable as to amusement, originality, acuity of observation or literary craftsmanship, the later adventures of Sam Slick are noteworthy chiefly as an illustration that satire is amazingly resistant to the literary formula. The sharp wit and acute insight that is precipitated in the reaction between observed behaviour and a creative sensibility does not discriminate as to its target:

once unleashed, it will attack its author as readily as any other; if muzzled, it will expire totally, and however much its creator may pretend that his eye is as clear and his aim as unerring as ever, he will not disguise the fatuity of continuing in the same vein.

By 1856, when Haliburton moved to England, his popularity was in eclipse -- to borrow the words of Sam Slick, he was "small potatoes . . . and few in a hill." (C2, 222) Although one of his long-held dreams for Nova Scotia was realized two years later with the completion of railway lines from Halifax to Windsor and Truro, he was too old and isolated to really care. In 1858 he received an honorary Doctorate of Civil Law from Oxford, yet he was hardly in demand on the lecture circuit; in the same year it is recorded that he gave an address to the Shoe Blacking Brigade of London on the occasion of their annual treat.[53] He was elected Member of Parliament for Launceston in 1859 and found himself out of place among a body where the colonies were considered a burden. But after "a lifetime of self-indulgence and convivial dissipation"[54] he was too sick to really care.

Yet despite his prolonged decline, Haliburton must be remembered for his very real satiric achievement. He was perhaps the first Canadian writer to break the tradition of following British models. By injecting a vigorous American character into the Canadian scene, he created a satiric voice

with tremendous range, and the flexibility to deal with everything from local peculiarities to the colonial position vis-a-vis imperial Britain and republican America. His greatness as a proselytizing satirist may be summarized by saying that he can still be read for insight as well as amusement.

James De Mille (1833-1880)

The question has naturally arisen: why is it that a literary figure of the prominence of Haliburton has had no successor? While in matters of this sort speculation is often over-indulged, either for its own enjoyment, or to advance or support a thesis without the encumbrance of discernible facts, nevertheless the question is relevant and arguable to a degree. The question itself is not new. Indeed, it may be said that many of Haliburton's contemporaries would have welcomed a successor long before the "Old Judge" was ready to depart the scene. That in itself may point to an answer. As one who was intimately knowledgeable with all levels of Nova Scotian society, from the highest social classes to the common people from whom he used to appropriate anecdotes, who was yet an outsider in his political views, Haliburton was in a unique position with his society, and one that could hardly be duplicated. Nor, indeed, could the society, for few controversies have so agitated Canadians, and especially Maritimers, as the

achievement of responsible government and the ensuing debates leading to Confederation, which Haliburton presumably had no regrets he did not live to see. Certainly after the political upheavals leading to 1867 the rest of the century was relatively calm (except for the Riel Rebellion, which would be a very difficult, if not inappropriate, subject for satire) and political views were relatively homogeneous.

One prominent literary historian of the early part of the present century who considered this question was J. D. Logan, in his article "Why Haliburton Has No Successor" in The Canadian Magazine of September, 1921. Logan answers the question by blaming it on the Canadian character, as if literature can be stimulated by a critic's scorn, or its non-production faulted.

"The outlook and vision of the Canadian people are so parochial, provincial, and idiocentric," Logan wrote, "as make them incapable of self-criticism, or of bearing criticism by others."[55] Fortunately this attitude in Canadian letters, which is built on the premise that critical self-flagellation (although Logan critically dissociates himself from "the Canadian people" by his use of the third person) may actually do some good, or if not will at least make us all feel better for the penance we have done, now seems hardly more than a relic from an antediluvian age. If Logan has a point it is that, in the period of national consolidation, certain sensitivities developed (parallel perhaps to

adolescent growing pains) that made satiric criticism more difficult if not more dangerous than in the days of rugged colonial individualism. The psychology of national foundation in the nineteenth century may be detected behind Logan's rationale:

> For two reasons Canada is not conditioned to produce Haliburton's like again. First, the Canadian people have no native genius for comic conception, and, secondly, their cultural education is not fitted to cause them to perceive the spiritual significance of the comic or to change their traditional Puritan or Calvinistic moral conspectus of existence into a universal conspectus of life and the universe. . . . The result is that to them the part is greater than the whole -- and what humor they do indulge, or invent, is either hard and dry, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, or ephemeral and idiotic.[56]

It is interesting to note here the direction in which Logan was heading, for if you combine the "hard and dry" with the "ephemeral and idiotic" you have something rather like the ironic comic formula of Stephen Leacock: "it has been my custom in preparing an article of a humorous nature to go down to the cellar and mix up half a gallon of myosis with a pint of hyperbole."[57] Robert L. McDougall, in answering the question of Haliburton's isolation, also leads us close to Leacock:

> The cutting attack through laughter was possible for Haliburton because he disliked many things intensely, because he was perfectly clear as to where and how his values differed from and were superior to the values commonly held in his society, and because there therefore existed between him and everything he opposed an area wide enough for the play of a vigorous dialectic. But as the extremes closed in upon the centre and the middle way found its justification

> socially and politically, the vantage point which he enjoyed far out on the wing was lost. . . . Only towards the end of the century did the centrality of the country's values become itself sufficiently marked to provoke the separation of viewpoint that the satiric spirit requires. Not unexpectedly, however, since the amount of cleavage was small, the forms developed were mild -- sophisticated irony and the humour that unites rather than divides the human family.[58]

But before Leacock is James De Mille, whose "mild" and "sophisticated irony" combined with an extravagant imagination to produce a most unusual piece of proselytizing satire. His A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder (posthumously published in 1888) is an anomaly, as it combines a tale of fantastic adventure with a scathing reductio ad absurdum critique of guilt-ridden Western society. De Mille himself is rather anomalous as well, particularly in relation to his own time. For one thing he was a professional writer of fiction; in the late 1860's he and May Agnes Fleming were the first Canadian writers to "sit down cold-bloodedly to write for money."[59] De Mille eventually produced several series of school fiction for boys and a number of "cracking good adventures" of the sort that G. A. Henty was writing in Britain.

Like Haliburton, but unlike McCulloch, De Mille is a native Canadian writer, born in Saint John in 1833, the son of Nathan De Mill, a lumber merchant. His early life and later writings were marked by two experiences that were most unusual for a boy of his place and time. At the age of 17 he was sent on a lengthy tour of Europe with his older

brother Budd, an experience he later utilized in his popular fiction. Following that he attended university: first at Acadia, in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, then at Brown, in Providence, Rhode Island, and graduated from the latter institution with a Master of Arts. De Mille subsequently ran an unsuccessful bookstore in his native town, taught at Acadia, was a professor of history and rhetoric at Dalhousie, and was being considered for the Chair of Rhetoric at Harvard when he died at the age of forty-six.[60]

But his greatest interest was in writing, and his list of published books runs to twenty-seven titles, with three others considered as probably his.[61] Of these, Strange Manuscript possesses the chief claim to attention today, not because it is better written than the others, or because its plot or characters are outstanding, but because of the irony and satire that De Mille works into his familiar framework. And "framework" is definitely the mot juste: the adventures of Adam More, the provocatively named protagonist, are framed inside the discovery of his manuscript by a group of Englishmen on a pleasure cruise. These four men are fairly stereotyped "humour" characters: Lord Featherstone, the owner of the yacht -- a dilettante; Dr. Congreve, a polymathic scientist; Oxenden, a linguist and humanist; and Melick, a "littérateur from London"[62] and sceptic.

Their escape from the ennui of London society to the sea, where they lie becalmed, is juxtaposed with the desperate

adventures of the protagonist to form the irony that frames the novel. It may have something to indicate about the relationship of the popular novelist with his audience, or De Mille may have been indicating an ironic perception of staid, unadventurous, conventional society, where personal comfort and indolence create a desire for adventure without the will to find it except in lurid novels. But this is all by way of prologue: one does not have to mine such speculative areas of the novel to discover its ironies or its satire. Even were they not obvious throughout, the discussion that accompanies the rotational reading of the manuscript on Featherstone's yacht makes them explicit, if ironically so.

The plot is straightforward, and by no means original: while becalmed off the Canary Islands, the four companions find a copper cylinder drifting in the ocean, which yields a manuscript written on an unusual vegetable matter identified by Congreve as papyrus. The writer, Adam More, identifies himself as a sailor, but he is clearly intended as a "real" sailor and not, like the readers of his manuscript, a dilettante. He is employed as first mate on a convict ship returning from Australia, which is also becalmed, in Antarctic waters, as his narrative begins. With Agnew, a shipmate, More sets off to a nearby island by lifeboat for some seal hunting and, to the surprise of no one with any familiarity with Victorian fiction, they become separated

from their ship in a storm and, after exhausting themselves in futile rowing, simply drift. Before reaching the outer edges of the unusual society they are about to encounter -- in the land of the Kosekin -- they ominously find the remains of a dead sailor on a small island. After they have buried him, More encourages his companion with a hopeful thought: "This world is only a part of life. We may lose it and yet live on. There is another world, and if we can only keep that in our minds we sha'n't be so ready to sink into despair. . . ." (39) This statement is also ironic, in retrospect, because "another world" is soon opening to them, although they do not recognize it. As they continue drifting, they come upon a peopled island -- but the people are grotesquely ugly cannibals who kill Agnew as More escapes in the boat.

To this point the story is essentially a variation on Edgar Allan Poe's Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket; indeed, there is little that can be claimed for plot originality throughout. Fortunately for De Mille, pastiche is not considered plagiarism like borrowing from a single author is, for his book's structure may be compared to a party hosted by Thomas Love Peacock where the main topic of discussion is A. Gordon Pym's recent trip to Erewhon, with all the stylistic and other anachronisms which that implies. In De Mille's defence, it must be pointed out that his appropriation of popular topics and styles is both conscious and

ironic.

But the dimensions of the characters are no more than can be expected of a popular thriller. Adam More, the convict ship's mate, is the stock adventure hero, a man whose speech is graceful, even prudish, and never even slightly crude, indeed a character beside whom Sam Slick cuts a Rabelaisian figure. He is in fact no more suggestive of the real sailor than Lord Featherstone; his natural speech resembles that of a schoolmaster under the influence of the "penny dreadfuls." As an example of his pedagogical side, this description of the Kosekin on his arrival will suffice:

> Weakness of eyes seemed common among these people, and therefore the officers had their cabin darkened, while the unfortunate rowers had to labor in the blazing sun. Such was my conclusion, and the fact reminded me of the miserable fellahin of Egypt, who have ophthalmia from the blazing sun and burning sand. (66)

Not the sort of observation that one can imagine being made aboard a convict ship.

Before he gets to this point, Adam drifts through a subterranean channel; he awakes to find that he has been carried into an inland sea facing a populous, mountainous country, whose warm and verdant countryside he attributes to "the flattening of the poles, which brought the surface nearer to the supposed central fires of the earth, and therefore created a heat as great as that of the equatorial regions." (63) As soon as he perceives that he is safe, Adam falls to his knees and thanks "the Almighty Ruler of the

skies for this marvellous deliverance" (60) though his jubilation is tempered by the reflection that "even civilized people would not necessarily be any kinder than savages." (63) The irony in this is that the Kosekin, who inhabit this land, are both: cannibalistic savages who have achieved a comfortable pre-mechanical civilization without losing their essential savagery -- like, De Mille implies, mankind in general.

On its surface the Kosekin world is, in many ways, the reverse of the Western world. Their polar year is six months of darkness and six months of light, which is not unusual in itself, except that the people stay inside during the light season and work during the darkness. Their concave polar world is the opposite of the usual convex landscape: "It seemed like a vast basin-shaped world, for all around me the surface appeared to rise, and I was in what looked like a depression; yet I knew that the basin and the depression were an illusion. . . ." (62) Physically the Kosekin are small and slender men of great apparent gentleness, and their hospitality reassures the castaway sailor. But to his increasing horror he discovers that their appearance is deceiving, for they worship darkness, death, and misery. The main thrust of De Mille's very ironic satire is felt throughout the remaining three-quarters of the book, where the Kosekin society is seen as an inversion and yet a logical extention of Western society. However, De Mille's indirect

didacticism is partly dissembled behind the gauze of a flimsy and sentimental romance between More and Almah, a young maiden from a neighbouring country, the only other foreigner, and Layelah, the daughter of the Kohen Gadol, the high priest of the bloodlusty Kosekin religion. The rest of the plot consists of a resolution of Adam's life in the unnamed country, where more fantastic adventures and the wooden and insipid romantic triangle are counterpointed by a fairly coherent yet inexplicit satire. While the fantastic, the sentimental, and the satiric are interwoven, it is the last that is the novel's chief claim to attention today.

The beautiful Almah and Adam More are strangers not only in name but also in experience. They love the light, unlike their half-lidded captors (reminiscent of some hypnagogic figures in Poe) who live like troglodytes during their half-year of sunshine; they are both repulsed by the Kosekin love of human sacrifice -- the sight of bodies prepared for a cannibal feast sends Adam into a swoon that would do justice to the most tightly-corsetted Victorian lady. Almah's role in this society emphasizes the morbid fascination on which it is based. She is a sort of acolyte to their godless religion of annihilation, responsible for replacing fresh crowns of flowers on the heads of Kosekin "saints," the victims of the sacrifice, who are kept in a sacred grotto. What Adam sees in the open sepulchres are not statues but the actual shrivelled and decomposed corpses,

with a flowery crown on each head and a ritual knife through each heart.

What De Mille is doing here is not as obvious as it first appears, for the unburied Kosekin saints are a grotesque satire on veneration as well as a dramatic prefigurement of Adam and Almah's intended fate. As in Burns's "Holy Willie's Prayer" ("But for Thy people's sake destroy them, / An' dinna spare"),[63] the technique of reductio ad absurdum applied to conventional religious attitudes produces something opposite to its precepts. Here human sacrifices become the subject of a morbid, even necrophiliac ritual. The logical extention is this: if religious statuary relics and representations of the anointed are sacred, their actual bodies must be evan more venerable.

This is horrible enough, but one of the qualifications for sainthood is even more grotesquely ironic. It seems that the Kosekin demand for death far exceeds the natural supply, so, because suicide is frowned upon as cowardly, they have artificially increased the death rate by means of "sacred hunts." In these hunts spear- and axe-carrying warriors, loaded into galleys or mounted upon giant ostrich-like birds, set off in search of the indigenous monsters. Inevitably, the monsters wreak a "sickening" slaughter upon the attackers, whose "blind and desperate courage" (96) is actually a ritualistic excuse for self-annihilation. Again the satire operates upon the hidden death-wish that can rationalize any death upon

any battlefield, no matter how futile the cause or suicidal the engagement. De Mille shows, by implication, that all battles reconcile death easier than life, for if it is honorable to die in battle, is there not something shameful about surviving? The Kosekin act in accord with this sort of logic by killing their own wounded, to give them "the blessing of darkness and death." Almah explains:

> They all love death and seek after it. To die for another is immortal glory. To kill the wounded, was to show that they had died for others. The wounded wished it themselves. . . . These people were too generous and kind-hearted to refuse to kill them after they had received wounds. (98)

Their other great "religious observance" comes at the end of each six months of light. The "feast of darkness" is almost a parallel to the Christian feast of Christmas -- but instead of celebrating birth and renewal, the ritual is one of sacrifice and later necrophagia, with the executions taking place on top of a pyramid. George Woodcock has pointed out that this is another example of De Mille's facility in arranging and pastiching popular materials: in this case he adduces a contemporary favorite, Prescott's Conquest of Mexico.[64] These sacrificial victims become the centerpiece in a grisly cannibalistic feast which, while not compared in any way with the Christian "communion," bears some relationship with it. As Almah says, "They can never understand us, and we can never understand them" (115); but the reader is meant to understand both at once and to see beneath Kosekin and Western life the operation of a similar, if elongated,

logic. De Mille is careful to keep his didacticism elusive and ironic, but in this case it can be speculated that he wishes us to consider that while death must be venerated as a part of human reality, there is a tendency for morbidity to enter into religion.

More soon finds that Kosekin hospitality is not what it seems, because each of them is constantly trying to disburden himself of his goods in search of pauperdom which, in this topsy-turvy world, is the measure of social prestige. Their seeming altruism is really, by their own standards, the greatest selfishness, as the two outsiders become slaves of the gifts showered upon them. They re-evaluate the situation when it becomes clear that the "kind-hearted and amiable miscreants" (113) are keeping them alive only as scapegoats for unwanted honours and possessions. Acceptance of these presents drives them down the social ladder. "Their ruling passion is the hatred of the self" (116) says Almah of their captors and their manic self-effacement. Unfortunately for those at whom they direct their blessings, the ultimate blessing is "the blessing of darkness and death" at the cannibal feast of "Mista Kosek" which follows the sacrifice. The desires of the captives themselves have no influence upon the bestowal of these honors, to which their high position as foreigners compel them.

As De Mille's satiric thrust is found in the juxtaposition of Kosekin society with Western society, it is the

structure and regular operation of the society that concerns the present discussion and not, as is often the case in satire, deviations from the social standards by evil or foolish men. As R. E. Watters has noted, "This focus upon the social structure derives from the belief that the good life for man derives primarily from the character of his social system."[65] For this reason the resolution of the novel, the foiled escapes of Adam with Almah and Layelah with Adam, the stock hairsbreadth escape from the sacrifice as Adam executes the executioners, and the social re-establishment under Adam and Almah as they face (in an appropriate reversal of stock situation) the sunrise, is not germane, with one exception. Adam's values are revealed to be so harmonious with Kosekin society, that with a minor adjustment to ensure that everyone has the amount of misery or joy that he wishes, he is able to rule. What Adam refuses to see, but what the reader gradually discovers through him, is that Kosekin society is not simply an inversion of his own, but (and this has more satiric possibilities) is largely a logical extention of it. It exposes certain trite beliefs and uncovers in Victorian society the meagreness and sentimentality with which it acknowledges the dark side of experience.

The chief failings on which the Kosekin are indicted, and which by implication are transferred to Western society, are that they mistake results for ends, and mistake the letter of the law for its essence. It is true that death is

the result of life, but it is a perversion of reason and of life to make of it the goal. By doing so, and by forbidding suicide, the Kosekin have in effect created a godless and uncharitable altar of self-denial and misery. "Their ruling passion is the hatred of the self," (116) explains Almah. Their lives, seemingly, are based on a perversion of the monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but without love and charity as their foundation, these concepts have directed a singularly bloodthirsty and masochistic asceticism. Their obedience is a willing submission to the lowest blood-passions of what are usually considered the lowest orders of society, and their chastity is love as a concept rather than a practice. Their poverty is the denial of the self, as much as possible, and the transference of personal benefits to others, along strict class lines. Thus "the paupers form the most honored, influential and envied portion of the community." (127)

Adam has the social structure explained to him by a Kohen, a man of high title but lowly position, whose dialogue with Adam is the book's main satiric section. His statements reveal the operation of a Swiftian irony:

> "I was born," said he, "in the most enviable of positions. My father and mother were among the poorest in the land. Both died when I was a child, and I never saw them. I grew up in the open fields and public caverns, along with the most esteemed paupers."

The Kohen's following speech explaining how, through lack of Kosekin virtue, he became a capitalist and a dignitary --

both symbols of shame and failure -- is a parody behind which one can detect De Mille, the unpretentious popular novelist, having some sport. Though the Kohen lives in comfort and relative ease, his speech is a complaint; it is related to the medieval exemplum and the "industrious apprentice" tradition, although parts of his statement are absurdly reversed. It is also an amusing parody of the boastful rags-to-riches complaints of a Stepsure, whose grim didacticism is the polar opposite (no pun intended) to De Mille's provocative, elusive irony.

Yet De Mille is also a proselytizer in his examination of Victorian society. He is pointing out that extremity in pursuit of virtue can be vicious, that charity is the real foundation of society, and that the sophisticated surface of society cannot fully hide, much less eliminate, the dark and animal side of man. The Kosekin mania for self-denial is altruism unworthy of the name, because it is based on masochistic self-hatred. As a corollary to this, De Mille shows that that without self-love there is no real love, and in the absence of love, religious and social rituals are absurdly meaningless formulas. Into this question of Kosekin poverty De Mille introduces the concept of "Kosekin revenge," thereby changing the application of the ancient formula that begins "Do unto others . . . . ."

> When one has been benefited by another, he is filled with a passion which may be called Kosekin revenge -- namely, a sleepless and vehement desire to bestow some adequate and corresponding benefit on the other.

> Feuds are thus kept up among families and wars among nations. For no one is willing to accept from another any kindness, any gift, or any honour, and all are continually on the watch to prevent themselves from being overreached in this way. (136)

De Mille's irony is cosmic, although J. D. Logan seems to have overlooked it: the Kosekin pursuit of ruin is a mirror reflection of our pursuit of wealth, and from De Mille's Olympian perspective, equally ridiculous: "Secret movements are sometimes set on foot which aim at a redistribution of property and a levelling of all classes, so as to reduce the haughty paupers to the same condition as the mass of the nation." (138) Kosekin workers' strikes are "always for harder work, longer hours, or smaller pay" (138); "Instead of robbers, the Kosekin punish the secret bestowers of their wealth on others"; (139) "Murder has its counterpart among the Kosekin in cases where one man meets another, forces money on him, and kills himself"; "Each one tries not to make money, but to lose it; but as the competition is sharp and universal, this is difficult, and the larger portion are unsuccessful." (140) Some of these descriptions are undoubtedly comic: "the fortunate few who are blessed with poverty . . . walk while the others ride, and from their squalid huts look proudly and contemptuously upon the palaces of their unfortunate fellow-countrymen." (139)

Against Adam More's conventionally shocked reactions to such absurdity, De Mille places the Kosekin's equal bewilderment at Western society as they understand it; and

the juxtaposition of cultures emits comparisons as well as contrasts. Northrop Frye has stated that "the satirist brings up . . . inconvenient data, sometimes in the form of alternative and equally plausible theories."[66] In Strange Manuscript, this is seen clearest in the questions of death and love. Adam soberly notices that "The love of death leads to perpetual efforts on the part of each to lay down his life for another," (139) and that those Kohens who produce the highest casualty rates are most honored. Yet when his interlocutor reminds him of the Western military leaders of whom he has boasted, that "You, with your pretended fear of death, wish to meet it in battle as eagerly as we do, and your most renowned men are those who have sent most to death." To this "strange remark," More, (who possesses little sense of irony, and none of humour), has "no answer to make." (155)

When the Kohen questions the alien sailor's views of love, he repeatedly exposes contradictions. Adam is seen to hold a romantic conception of love that is not irreconcilable with "the blessing of darkness and death." Once, when speaking of Almah, Adam says: "To live without her . . . would be so bitter that death with her would indeed be sweet. If I could save her life by laying down my own, death would be sweeter still; and not one of you Kosekin would meet it so gladly." (156) Later, when Layelah offers him escape on the back of a giant pterodactyl, an escape that would allow both him and Almah to live separately (whereas if he returns both

will be executed), he exhibits a hardening of this romantic death-wish into a morbid intransigence, based on Kosekin-like reasoning: "I would rather die, and have her die with me, than live, and have her think me false." (206) He says he cannot endure the thought that he would be forever parted from his beloved -- "and still less could I endure the thought that she should believe me false." (207) That "still less" indicates what Adam's priorities are; his total selfishness is as extreme as the Kosekin's utter self-abnegation. De Mille shows that both the selfishly romantic and the nihilistically selfless positions are extreme -- and gives some credence to the Kohen's comment to Adam: "You have been brought up under some frightful system, where nature is violated." (156)

Adam's desire for "requited love" is mocked by a lecture from the Kohen on the nature of perfect love, which again is conventional in statement (with a strong Biblical intonation) but ironical in application, because he actually believes what Adam and his kind merely give lip service to. The Kohen explains:

> "I cannot understand," said he. "A madman might imagine that he loved life and desired riches; but as to love, why even a madman could not think of requital, for the very nature of the passion of love is the most utter self-surrender, and a shrinking from all requital; wherefore, the feeling that leads one to desire requital cannot be love. I do not know what it can be -- indeed, I never heard of such a thing before, and the annals of the human race make no mention of such a feeling. For what is love? It is the ardent outflow of the whole being -- the

yearning of one human heart to lavish all its treasures upon another. Love is more than self-denial; it is self-surrender and utter self-abnegation. Love gives all away, and cannot possibly receive anything in return. A requital of love would mean selfishness, which would be self-contradiction. The more one loves, the more he must shrink from requital.

"What!" cried I, "among you do lovers never marry?"

"Lovers marry? Never!"

"Do married people never love one another?"

The Kohen shook his head.

"It unfortunately sometimes happens so," said he, "and then the result is, of course, distressing. For the children's sake the parents will often remain with one another, but in many cases they separate. No one can tell the misery that ensues where a husband and wife love one another." (133)

The Swiftian reductio ad absurdum quality of the Kohen's logic is readily apparent.

The underlying irony in the Kohen's conversation with Adam (and in ensuing conversations with Layelah and the Kohen Gadol) is that he is treated as an ignorant member of an unenlightened civilization, who does not have even a basic understanding of life. He does not realize the difference between man and the lower orders, and, the Kohen implies, has little understanding beyond his naked appetites.

"Why, if men were to feel as you say you feel, they would be mere animals. Animals fear death; animals love to accumulate such things as they prize; animals, when they love, go in pairs, and remain with one another. But man, with his intellect, would not be man if he loved life and desired riches and sought for requited love." (132)

The satiric device used here is a low burlesque of Western man and his standards, by portraying them as base and ignorant, while the opposed Kosekin standards are advocated by the Kohen as emanations of a higher, more cultivated sensibility.

Like McCulloch and Haliburton, like all proselytizers, De Mille cannot resist the occasional direct statements -- although we are not thereby compelled to take them at face value; he shows clearly, for instance, that the motivations of the Kosekin are not "directly the opposite of ours," (215) since Adam is revealed to embody some of the things he most detests. But through the device of putting comments into the four mouths of his travelling symposium, he waggishly undercuts his novel's pedestrian conventionality with ironic "reviews" of his own story. The manuscript readers serve to permit natural breaks at convenient points in the narrative while they change places and make profound, sceptical, vacuous, or curious remarks, according to their various "humours." The polymathic Congreve and Oxenden debate, Featherstone exclaims, and Melick criticizes. Melick describes the style of the writer of the manuscript (ostensibly Adam More) as "vicious," "stilted," (76) and "detestable." (216) He is sceptical that the manuscript may be the work of a sensation-seeking author; in any case "it sounds like one of the voyages of Sinbad the Sailor." (75) Melick is the vehicle for the ultimate irony in this very ironic book -- the authorial irony; as he says,

> "this writer is tawdry; he has the worst vices of the sensational school -- he shows everywhere marks of haste, gross carelessness, and universal feebleness. When he gets hold of a good fancy, he lacks the patience that is necessary in order to work it up in an effective way. He is a gross plagiarist, and over and over again violates in the most glaring manner all the ordinary proprieties of style." (217)

Melick is the manuscript's best internal critic. He calls it a "satirical romance" (215) and states directly, if somewhat bombastically, its intent:

> "The satire is directed against the restlessness of humanity; its impulses, feelings, hopes, and fears -- all that men do and feel and suffer. It mocks us by exhibiting a new race of men, animated by passions and impulses that are directly the opposite of ours, and yet no nearer happiness than we are. . . . The writer thus mocks at all our dearest passions and strongest desires; and his general aim is to show that the mere search for happiness per se is a vulgar thing, and must always result in utter nothingness. The writer also teaches the great lesson that the happiness of man consists not in external surroundings, but in the internal feelings, and that heaven itself is not a place but a state." (215)

Strange Manuscript must be considered to rise or fall on its merits as a satirical novel of ideas, for it has little to recommend it as a romance. As George Woodcock has stated, "Romantic sensationalism and ironic didacticism mark the extremes of De Mille's uneven powers as a writer."[67] In this novel the latter impinges upon the former chiefly, as we have seen, through the voice of Melick. It is a fittingly ironic mouthpiece for its author, of whom his friend Archibald MacMechan recalled, "He seems to have cared nothing for literary reputation; he never pushed himself into the public view; he knew none of the arts of self-advertisement, or of literary log-rolling. He was the very reverse of a popularity hunter."[68] But despite De Mille's lack of pretension as a writer of popular entertainments, Woodcock rightly points out that "he was a bifocal novelist, whose works can be read at double levels of intent and meaning."[69] Or as Woodcock has

written elsewhere:

> In the process De Mille -- like so many satirists -- manages to have the best of both worlds, for the selflessness of the Kosekin reflects on the selfishness of our own world, and at the same time we realize that even virtue and self-sacrifice carried to an extreme can be repulsive, so that we see the man of aggressive virtue pilloried at the same time as the man of good-natured vice.[70]

I would also side with Woodcock in his contention that while Strange Manuscript has an obvious connection with utopian and dystopian fiction, it is neither of these; rather, it belongs to the class of fiction that M. H. Abrams has described as "representations of imaginary places which, either because they are superior to the real world or manifest exaggerated versions of some of its unsavory aspects, are used primarily as vehicles for satire on human life and society. . . ."[71]

As a hero, Adam More may be redoubtable, but as a moral being he is riddled with inconsistencies and, to say the least, imperfectly meditated beliefs. He is revealed to be as extreme in his moral stance as the Kosekin; he is a hopeless romantic who professes to love life, but would send himself and his beloved to their deaths to preserve his romantic preux chevalier image. He is not, clearly, an isolated case, but a representative of Western man and, as Frye has pointed out, "once a hypocrite who sounds exactly like a good man is sufficiently blackened, the good man also may seem a little dingier than he was";[72] and this applies to all good men who initially identify with Adam's point of view.

In sum, Strange Manuscript is a novel with

surprisingly insightful variations on its conventional subject and structure. More than any other work in this study, it recalls the meaning of the Roman "satura" (translated as "miscellany" or "hash") in its pastiche of miscellaneous popular styles and concerns. Of course it can be faulted on that account: the parts are often discrete, and the sentimental sub-plots are obviously stitched into the whole as a sop to the author's usual middlebrow readership. Fred Cogswell, writing in The Literary History of Canada, has observed that Strange Manuscript "fails to achieve greatness only because its author attempted in its composition to do too many things at once."[73] I don't know if we can accept the burden of that "only," but there is undeniably a lack of control in its composition, as manifested by its structural and narrative bulkiness. Woodcock cites internal evidence to show that the book was abandoned rather than concluded, adducing particularly the abrupt ending, which leaves several plot elements unresolved,[74] and its posthumous publication at least suggests the possibility that De Mille would have tied up the loose ends had he personally prepared it for publication.

Conclusion

A convenient overview of these three proselytizing satirists, McCulloch, Haliburton, and De Mille, can be found in connection with some of the categories in Frye's Anatomy of Criticism. Frye's discussion of the "Menippean satire"

or "anatomy" is useful in seeing De Mille's Strange Manuscript in its separate tradition of indirect satire. In accordance with the Menippean type, Strange Manuscript "deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes"; in fact, it "presents people as mouthpieces."[75] Its mouthpieces, however, are not the "characters" of the comic novel, but interact to present "a vision of the world as a single pattern."[76]

McCulloch and Haliburton also present single patterns, but they do so directly. The Stepsure Letters and the Sam Slick books both belong, in Frye's mythic discussion, to his "first phase," "the satire of the low norm." Frye says that it "takes for granted a world which is full of anomalies, injustices, follies, and crimes, and yet is permanent and undisplacable. . . . What is recommended is conventional life at its best."[77] He instances Sam Slick in this context, but Stepsure is a purer example of the type he further describes as "often a rustic with pastoral affinities,"[78] employed by the satirist "as a foil for the various alazons of society."[79] Stepsure is a direct and uncomplicated "counsellor of prudence," whereas Sam Slick is both eiron and alazon and thus, in terms of authorial irony, a transition between McCulloch, where there is none, and De Mille, where it is pervasive.

The evolutionary step that is represented by De Mille's Strange Manuscript is substantiated by what Frye sees as a logical transition:

> The strength of the conventional person is not in the conventions but in his common-sense way of handling them. Hence the logic of satire itself drives it on from its first phase of conventional satire on the unconventional to a second phase in which the sources and values of conventions themselves are objects of ridicule.[80]

This second phase, to which Strange Manuscript may be said to belong, is "the comedy of escape, in which a hero runs away to a more congenial society without transforming his own."[81] Adam More's escape is inadvertent, and his social transformation is ironic in bringing the alternate (Kosekin) society into some conformity with his own, which is seen as equally wrongheaded; this may be likened to some historical instances where North American pioneers transformed the "barbaric and primitive" habits of native Indians by turning them into alcoholics. And this may be, au fond, De Mille's insight: we are all addicted to our own culture's kinds of barbarism, without seeing them as such. Frye's comment that "satire may often represent the collision between a selection of standards from experience and the feeling that experience is bigger than any set of beliefs about it"[82] is perhaps the most cogent summary of Strange Manuscript that one could find. The feeling in The Stepsure Letters is, of course, that belief is bigger than experience -- another indication that De Mille and McCulloch are a hemisphere apart.

It would probably surprise most literate Canadians to hear that in nineteenth century Nova Scotia there arose three significant proselytising satirists who produced a range of

satire from the militant and pontifical to the ironic and existential. Their perspective evolved in respect to their degree of urbanization, their interaction with the world at large, and the amount and types of irony they employed.

The urban gap between McCulloch's Pictou, Haliburton's Windsor, and De Mille's Halifax may not seem significant until considered in the context of Nova Scotian society. Yet the corresponding literary sophistication of the audience that accompanied urbanization kept the society of an author's readers identifiable enough that all of these satirists believed they could be a positive influence on the operation of man and society. To some extent, it may be said, they felt (pace Pope) that the proper study of man is mankind. Individuals are studied representationally rather than in depth; even Sam Slick, whose portrait is two-dimensional, has enough flexibility (or possibly, little enough consistency) that it could accommodate itself to the vagaries of Haliburton's subject and mood.

In this first phase of Canadian satire, man is viewed in terms of his potential. Whether he is seen as chronically irresponsible and obsessed with baubles, as insecure and lacking the ambition to achieve a success that lies clearly ahead, or as a sentimental egotist without self-understanding, the perspective is the same: man's present inadequate condition as contrasted with his glorious potential. Optimism, though often obscured by rancorous criticism, perennially

shines through, though as irony gradually attains a position of dominance in the authorial tone, the great potential is less clearly and confidently seen, and the note of optimism more covertly sounded. But however expressed, it remains central to the overall conception, because for these satirists it was still possible to draw lines of demarcation between good and evil forcefully, but without despair, to take a stand with the assurance that what they said really mattered and could help.

CHAPTER II

THE ANTI-ROMANTICS

Stephen Leacock (1869-1944)

On January 1, 1901, as the first twentieth century dawn broke across Canada, a perhaps unparalleled spirit of optimism was prevalent throughout the country. Editorial writers in papers from the Ottawa *Commonwealth* to the Dawson *Daily Times* were enthusiastically reviving the sentiment of another editorialist, Joseph T. Clark of *Saturday Night*, who several years earlier had written that "the twentieth century belongs to Canada."[1] Undoubtedly there were many reasons to think so.

> At the turn of the century Canadian society was undergoing changes so drastic as to constitute a social revolution. The agrarian and industrial "boom" following the opening of the West brought the Canadian economy to its first great period of material expansion, returned the social order to a state of flux, stimulated the speculative spirit and the accumulation of wealth, and encouraged a mood of political and commercial optimism. It was an era to which Canadian writers for the first time applied the term "materialistic."[2]

The implications of this kind of expansion upon the social order are obvious. North America, and Canada in particular, was still a civilization of small towns: in the words of one anonymous CPR conductor, "Wherever there's a siding that's a town; and where there's a siding and a tank, that's a city!"[3] But the country was filling up rapidly, and the stimulus of a relatively late "industrial revolution"

sent many rural settlers into the growing urban centres. One writer who felt the effects of that transition very keenly -- to the extent that he never completely made it -- was Stephen Leacock.

Born in 1869 in Swanmore, Hampshire, England, Leacock moved to Canada with his parents at age six, in 1876, because his father was sent out as a remittance man. The family took up farming near Lake Simcoe in Ontario, and although his father left for good in 1887 and there were ten other children in the family, Stephen was educated, first at Upper Canada College, then at the University of Toronto. After eight unhappy years teaching school, he studied political economy at the University of Chicago, taking a Ph.D in 1903.[4] "The meaning of this degree," he later wrote, "is that the recipient of instruction is examined for the last time in his life, and is pronounced completely full. After this, no new ideas can be imparted to him."[5]

His first book was a text, Elements of Political Science, published in 1906. His first collection of humour, Literary Lapses (1910), was assembled by his wife, Beatrix, and a friend, from pieces he had written for the college paper. After Houghton, Mifflin and Company, the publishers of his Elements, had turned down an offer to publish his Lapses, Leacock ran off three thousand copies on his own initiative, and distributed them to the railway market, where a copy chanced to fall into the hands of John Lane, publisher of The

Bodley Head in London, who launched a spectacularly successful writing career for Leacock when he brought out Lapses. Thereafter, Leacock published some sixty books, about half of them of a humorous nature, and the rest histories, essays and political theory.

Since his fame rests on his humour -- he was probably the English-speaking world's most popular humorist between 1910 and 1925 -- some of his critics have allowed his image (both created and apocryphal) to beguile them into ignoring the rich satiric strain in his humour. But as Donald Cameron has written, "Humour proceeds by revealing incongruities . . . : where the incongruities are man-made the revelation must often have a satirical effect, and in this sense much of Leacock's work includes incidental satire."[6] His two finest books, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912), and Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich (1914), contain deft satire on, respectively, the foolish, flawed humanity of the small town, and the grotesque anti-humanity of the city. Implicitly confronting the effects of the contemporary social transition, he left no doubt as to which side he was on, but in both cases he revealed the romanticism that underlies the self-conceptions of the inhabitants.

Sunshine Sketches contains satire that is neither incidental nor dominant; it is an extension of the techniques of the local colourists, the work of a humorist with an ironic vision of the small towns that nurtured him. Leacock

would probably not have agreed that it contains satire at all, for he was very protective of his popular image as a benevolent entertainer. Disregarding E. B. White's warning that "Humour can be dissected, as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind,"[7] Leacock wrote two books about the nature of humour. They propound the view that the malicious, aggressive, satirical side of humour has been bypassed by human progress and the growth of civilization, and while he recognizes that humour has its elements of pathos, he defines it as "the kindly contemplation of the incongruities of life, and the artistic expression thereof."[8] Sunshine Sketches is kindly and loving in expression, but its underlying irony is harsh; where there is sunshine, there are usually shadows, and here the shadows stand out more clearly in contrast to the sunny, romantically idyllic facade of Mariposa.

Once one gets beneath the narrator's sunny presentation of Mariposan life and looks at the events he is describing, the Mariposans are not only ridiculous, but in some cases criminal: city officials are petty and corrupt, the local church embarks on a grandiose expansion so poorly conceived that it requires a providential fire (in the process defrauding an insurance company) to recoup its losses. Seen coldly and clinically, Mariposan life is dominated by pomposity and self-interest. But Leacock is anything but cold and clinical: he reveals rather than exposes its

faults. His tone is the chatty, informal style of a local native introducing his home town to a visitor who is "probably well acquainted with a dozen towns just like it." (1) Leacock emphasizes the typicality of Mariposa life with asides like "of course, you know all about it just as well as I do," (89) and "for all I know you may yourself have seen such elsewhere." (79-80)

The narrator's style is essentially informative and anecdotal. The nostalgic quality which gives a roundness to its comic conception is chiefly produced by the last sketch, "L'Envoi. The Train to Mariposa." The narrator speaks with pride, though with ironic overtones that infrequently become explicit. As a representative of Mariposa, he articulates its unwritten civic motto: there is more here than meets the eye; Leacock, of course, makes of this an ironic, personal interpretation. As Desmond Pacey has stated, "Mariposa isn't content to be a sleepy small town: it wants itself to become a metropolis."[9] The ostensible purpose of Leacock's narrator is to show that Mariposa's placid appearance is an illusion, but what he shows is that it is a different type of illusion than its inhabitants understand.

"To the careless eye the scene on Main Street of a summer afternoon is one of deep and unbroken peace." (2) However, "this quiet is mere appearance" (2); four men are making sausages in a shop, four girls are chattering in the telephone office, professional men are sitting in their

offices, "with their coats off, ready to work at any moment." (2) Civic pride is the keynote, particularly its aping a highly urbanized, highly inappropriate model. Naturally, the littleness of the "Little Town" is only emphasized by the jejune illustrations used to "prove" to the visitor that "the place is a mere mad round of gaiety." (3) The technique used throughout is the high burlesque, which produces ridicule, fondly though it is done. Mariposa's collective illusion as a "rushing go-ahead town" (3) is taken almost seriously, so that its proofs make it ridiculous. For instance, we find that the most powerful man in town is Josh Smith, a saloon-keeper, and are told "I know nothing in history to compare with the position of Mr. Smith among those who drink over his bar, except, though in a lesser degree, the relation of the Emperor Napolean to the Imperial Guard." (6) We soon find that he is illiterate, but because he has a grand manner hardly anyone knows it: "He always dealt with written documents with a fine air of detachment. I don't suppose there were ten people in Mariposa who knew that Mr. Smith couldn't read." (14)

The romanticized perceptions of Mariposans are burlesqued, after the usual fashion, by taking their pretentions seriously. Leacock's irony is skillful and apt, for the excuses that a person or a community makes to itself are usually incongruous when made by an outsider. Thus he indicates that Mariposa is hardly a whistle-stop on the line:

"Even the transcontinental railways, as any townsman will tell you, run through Mariposa. It is true that the trains mostly go through at night and don't stop." (4) By posing as its supporter and apologist, Leacock is able to play devil's advocate:

> After the winter, the snow melts and the ice goes out of the lake, the sun shines high and the shanty-men come down from the lumber woods and lie round drunk on the sidewalk outside of Smith's hotel -- and that's spring time. Mariposa is then a fierce, dangerous lumber town, calculated to terrorize the soul of a newcomer who does not understand that this also is only an appearance and that presently the rough-looking shanty-men will change their clothes and turn back again into farmers. (5)

The involvement of the contemporary social transition in this is that the narrator is viewing Mariposa both from within, as a native son, and from without, as one who has lived in the cities. So when he makes a statement like "The foyer of the opera in Paris may be a fine sight, but I doubt if it can compare with the inside of Eliot's drug store in Mariposa -- for real gaiety and joy of living" (111) he is saying several things at once. He is burlesquing the drug store as a local "hot spot" by an incongruous comparison, but he is also stating something he believes. While satirizing local pretentions he also suggests that Mariposa does have a share of the good life, and so should be seen on its own terms, rather than against the larger and more sophisticated models to which it constantly aspires. Pacey has remarked of Mariposa and its like, that in them "the noises of the

contemporary industrial era are heard only as a faint and distant murmur"[10] -- but for the Mariposans it is more than a murmur of encouragement, it is a veritable siren's call.

Leacock's satiric attack is two-pronged, based on Mariposa society as it is and as it pretends to be. The small-town foibles of Jeff Thorpe the barber, who accidentally makes a stock market killing of forty thousand dollars and then allows himself to be swindled by a phony New York corporation, is one thing, and the abortive "whirlwind campaign" to raise money for the church is quite another. Jeff's naiveté, which keeps him clinging to an apparently valueless stock, is his financial making, and also his financial ruin. The reaction of the local people is amusing because it shows the shallowness of their perception of the world beyond their purview. Myra, Jeff's daughter, immediately resigns from the Telephone Exchange, "and everybody knew that she was to go to a dramatic school in the fall and become a leading actress." (31) But after the money has inevitably been swindled from them, their lives are not seriously affected; Jeff settles comfortably back into making a living at five cents a shave. In delineating Jeff's simplicity, Leacock does not ignore his humanity, (he keeps his shop open late to pay off five hundred dollars that the stableman invested), nor does he end in pathos:

> Pathetic? tut! tut! You don't know Mariposa. Jeff has to work pretty late, but that's nothing -- nothing at all, if you've worked hard all your lifetime. And Myra is back at the Telephone Exchange -- they were glad enough to get her, and she says now that if there's one thing she hates,

> it's the stage, and she can't see how the actresses put up with it. (35)

The Thorpes may be foolish and deluded, but they have a bedrock resilience because their values have not been corrupted by their illusions.

Josh Smith, the entrepreneurial innkeeper, is able to circumvent the spirit if not the actual letter of the law to retain his liquor license, but his manipulations are clearly not harmful to the community nor any of its members, and while the incident is recounted in high style, it is obviously a bagatelle. Furthermore, Josh keeps his restaurants open, as a service to his neighbours, even after the license has been renewed.

Many of the incidents in the book are played for broad comedy, where the satire is quite incidental. The farcical excursion of the Mariposa Belle and the romance of Peter Pupkin and Zena Pepperleigh fall into this class. Pupkin, a very errant knight indeed, has the romantic notion of killing himself because Zena "had danced four times with a visitor from the city, a man who was in the fourth year at the University and who knew everything." (114) His rather precious idea that "banking is a wild life and everyone knows it" (95) becomes ironically true in a farcical episode where he and the bank's caretaker mistake each other for robbers.

This balance between satiric distance and comic or pathetic identification (sometimes both) is not always maintained in the same proportions, even within individual

characters. Josh Smith is seen as a lovable rogue when he gets his license renewed by trickery, yet he later burns the church so the parish can have the insurance, and he perjures himself in denying it. Following that he is elected to Parliament by a dirty trick, and while he is no worse than the standing member he defeats, he is clearly unprincipled and self-seeking, and his reaction to the victory shows that he is just along for the ride: "Mr. Smith, of course, said nothing. He didn't have to -- not for four years -- and he knew it." (147)

Some of the minor characters are played for satiric comedy. Golgotha Gingham, the undertaker, sees all his activities in terms of his job: "I have often heard him explain that to associate with the living, uninteresting though they appear, is the only way to secure the custom of the dead." (9) He recalls his only excursion into the wilderness as an idyllic communion with nature -- but we find that he was there for the purpose of recovering a drowned corpse. Such foibles as these, while ironically considered, are dealt with a light and affectionate touch. Not so some of the others at whom the satire is directed, for while hardly what could be termed Juvenalian, it is nonetheless ruthless and cutting.

Peter and Zena are romantic sentimentalists and therefore silly, but they are also redeemed by their romance because they find a romantic truth that is deeper than their

romantic illusions. Leacock was an anti-romantic, but hardly a member of the school of sordid naturalism. He believed in romance and illusion, but not to the point where people romanticize their faults or over-value the things they don't have. Cameron is of the opinion that "Leacock had no real patience with any kind of mechanical realism; he felt literature should reflect the inner and ideal life of man rather than its flawed surface. His point is that people are better than their surface often reveals. . . ."[11] I would quibble only that Leacock generally, as he does here, shows the inner and ideal life concurrently and in juxtaposition with the flawed surface of his characters, so that while satirizing romanticism, he is also indulging in and supporting it. This bifocal love/hate view of Mariposa is one of the reasons for its continuing popularity, and I suspect that its essentially vacillating perspective is at the core of the "Canadianism" that many readers detect in it. In the case of Zena Pepperleigh, her romantic, schoolgirl view of Peter Pupkin is later ironically confirmed when Peter is found to be the sole heir to his father's business and fortune -- which in twentieth century terms makes him a real "merchant prince."

Dean Drone is an even better example of the variety of tone in Sunshine Sketches: he is introduced as a comic figure, is later satirically skewered for laziness, pettiness and vanity and, finally, is left in a halo of pathos. When first met he is euphemistically preaching against Josh Smith from

the pulpit, using high-sounding Biblical phrases; when seen next he is outfitting himself for the "marine excursion" of the Knights of Pythias, "with a trolling line in case of maskinonge, and a landing net in case of pickerel, and with his eldest daughter, Lilian Drone, in case of young men." (37) His discussions with Dr. Gallagher on the Mariposa Belle reveal him as a silly, self-important man, but Leacock spares him the lash until the next chapter, "The Ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Drone." Herein he is indicted rather harshly: he is incompetent even at his one specialty, the translation of Greek, though he is quite vain about it. His other-worldliness is not spiritual, but merely a general vagueness and irrelevance. Robertson Davies makes the excuse that he cannot keep his accounts straight "probably because his education concentrated chiefly on classics,"[12] but many men of little or no education could doubtless have kept a balance of his simple ledgers. To the local children he is a saint, for he makes them toys and amuses them, but he is inadequate before his maturer responsibilities.

His desire for a grander ecclesiastical edifice is unreasonable considering the congregation's slim resources of manpower and money; however, the old one is levelled to the ground and a new one raised, towering "like a beacon on a hill." (61) Although it is built as a "Greater Testimony" (62) and an "Ark of Refuge," (64) the numerous collections needed to maintain payments on it soon reduce the congregation

by forty per cent. When the obvious ways of raising money have been exhausted, banker Mullins suggests a "whirlwind campaign," oblivious to the fact that such a scheme needs either a lot of small contributors or a few wealty supporters, and that Mariposa, unlike the metropolitan centres which originated the idea, has neither. Inevitably, it is a failure, for as the narrator drily remarks: "It may be that there are differences between Mariposa and the larger cities that one doesn't appreciate at first sight." (71)

Since Drone is incompetent to resolve the chaos he has created by his grandiose scheme of expansion, several of his parishioners, led by Josh Smith, remove the problem through the efficacious application of a can of kerosene and a match. Meanwhile Drone is attempting to write a letter of resignation because he is upset at having been called a mugwump. The blaze that he sees when he looks up from his writing is another irony: not only the physical destruction of the church, it is also the symbolic destruction of the principles on which it is founded. It is expedient because the church is over-insured, and the congregation is able to write off its debt and bank a tidy profit once the church has literally become a "beacon kindled upon a hill."

Drone's attempt to write a letter of resignation on such childish grounds and in such urgent circumstances in the life of his parish is satiric, but when he has a stroke at the sight of his church in holocaust, a stroke that leaves him

unfit for any practical work beyond teaching the infant class their Biblical lessons, there is pathos. But Leacock is again not content to end on that note, for despite his losses the Dean is happier at the end -- relieved of responsibilities he could not carry out, he has found his own level, and Leacock's conclusion to his story balances the pathos with humour:

> So you will understand that the Dean's mind is, if anything, even keener, and his head even clearer than before. And if you want proof of it, notice him there beneath the plum blossoms reading in the Greek: he has told me that he finds that he can read, with the greatest ease, works in the Greek that seemed difficult before, because his head is so clear now. (86)

One of the elements of Sunshine Sketches that gives it such a remarkable quality of pleasantness, despite its ironies, is that none of its characters is ever hurt in the final analysis. The portrait of Judge Pepperleigh is similarly effected, so it will suffice to note that the Judge's corruption (or, at the least, incompetence) on the bench is humanized by the tragedy of his son's death in South Africa, and lightened by the marriage of his daughter and his renewed acquaintance with an old friend who is the father of his future son-in-law.

In one of his two extended studies on the nature of humour, Leacock stated his belief that pathos is an essential ingredient of its greatest examples: "Humour in its highest reach touches the sublime: humour in its highest reach mingles with pathos: it voices sorrow for our human lot and

reconciliation with it."[13] This theory finds its greatest application in Sunshine Sketches.

Leacock did not hesitate to show the "littleness" behind the grand facades of the characters in his "little town," but he did not do it in a spirit of detraction. Rather, he tried to show the true basis of our common humanity; like his contemporary Charlie Chaplin (who, Ralph Curry tells us, offered him a "magnificent" sum to go to Hollywood and write screenplays about the time "talkies" appeared)[14] he represented the little man. (We are, as he showed so sympathetically, all little men). Curry, his best biographer, notes,

> Leacock's favorite humorous character, the little man in the society too complex for him, had to be unconscious of his ridiculous appearance or he would have become a second-rate tragic figure. As it was, he preserved his dignity by continuing, in his ignorance, to act like a man.[15]

Cameron takes a broader view of Leacock's essential sympathy with his characters:

> Leacock . . . is an idealist, a romantic, whose sense of humour is a way of covering the smart of his disappointment at the gap between the way life is and the way he feels it ought to be. Behind the man of the world is a boy who cannot quite reconcile himself to the discovery that cheaters sometimes do prosper.
>
> To Leacock's mind, the function of the artist is not merely to show us how foolish and petty and cruel we are; anyone can see that, we all know it too well already. The artist's responsibility is to preserve our sense of our own futility and remind us at the same time of our nobility.[16]

The picture he gives of Mariposa shows that humanity can be cultivated in the right conditions, just as the picture

of the City in the succeeding Arcadian Adventures demonstrates that it can be destroyed in the wrong environment. The narrator's assumed innocence in Sunshine Sketches is not only an ironically oblique way of conveying certain unpalatable impressions of Mariposa, but a true reflection of the spirit of mutual sympathy and the acceptance of one another's failings that pervades Mariposa. As Cameron has pointed out, "The recognition of each other's humanity is an impulse which Mariposa consciously values."[17] In a smaller community, where everyone knows everyone else's business, people fortunately tend to develop a balance between their critical and sympathetic faculties. This is harder to achieve in a social situation where people are at a greater emotional distance, and where the greater physical proximity to strangers can be a constant intrusion. In Mariposa everyone keeps a strong sense of community by getting involved in whatever happens: "of course everybody belongs to the Knights of Pythias and the Masons and Oddfellows, just as they all belong to the Snow Shoe Club and the Girls' Friendly Society." (38) And everyone is Irish for the purpose of celebrating St. Patrick's Day, Scottish on the feast of St. Andrew, and English on St. George's. Even the fourth of July is celebrated here as vigorously as in the United States. And why not? Feasts were not intended to be exclusive -- and Mariposans are a convivial lot.

The reader is seduced into this sort of sympathetic

attitude by the narrator's assumption that he is discussing things which the reader can personally relate to -- in a sense, Mariposa represents everyone's home town. The reader thus feels a sense of identification with characters he may otherwise recognize as "shallow" or "flat." He is finally seduced by "L'Envoi," the last chapter, into -- if not nostalgia -- a representation of nostalgia. It is interesting to note here that while Leacock cannot be credited with an appreciation of the modern narrative techniques as used by such writers as Pound, Joyce, and Proust, the first half of "L'Envoi" may be described as a conservative cousin to the "stream of consciousness" approach; later in the chapter the style becomes somewhat affected, but by then the mood is established. Of course, its appeal may also be attributed to the appeal of the subject matter; it was this concluding essay, said Curry, that "made clear where the real appeal of the work lay: North America was still a land of small towns, and even the people who had left home remembered the little towns with pleasure and affection."[18]

The sense of affection thus communicated balances the satiric strain into something kindly and avuncular. As many critics have previously stated, in Sunshine Sketches Leacock loves what he also dislikes; because he loves the humanity of the small towns, his sympathy mingles with his criticism. His anti-romantic satire is used to deflate romanticism, not to destroy it. The final image is romantic, but no less

authentic for that reason. Having been shown the other side of Mariposa, having been given the trick of irony, the reader is left to use it against that final image if he will. However, it is not likely that he will, for Leacock has demonstrated that certain kinds of romanticism are truthful, not the kind that takes us away from what we are and into a fantasyland, but the kind that is a way of appreciating the value that underlies our common humanity. In short, in Sunshine Sketches, Leacock's satiric perception of humanity's flaws does not undermine his romantic attachment. It is in fact the cause of it.

With the close of Sunshine Sketches the reader is suddenly transported to the Mausoleum Club in the unnamed City from which the narrator has taken his nostalgic journey to Mariposa. This is the setting for Arcadian Adventures, Leacock's most vigorous, coherent and sustained satire, where (in Pacey's phrase) the noises of the contemporary industrial age, which in Sunshine Sketches were a murmur, have become a roar -- of greed, inhumanity, and the triumph of repellent men.

Arcadian Adventures seems deliberately complementary to Sunshine Sketches. In it the sweet forgiveness and affection that balanced the astringent satire of the earlier book is not to be found; in its place is an anger and pessimism that find their outlet in highly amusing but loveless satire. It is as if a Mariposan has moved to the City under the

impression that the grass is greener there, but finds hardly any grass at all, and that either decaying or fenced in by the rich.

Arcadian Adventures, "a trenchant anatomy of the America of Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis and the muckrakers: the world of competition gone mad, of untrammelled rapacity and greed,"[19] may be considered, in terms of the traditional critical poles of satire, Leacock's only sustained Juvenalian satire -- in contrast to the Horatian Sunshine Sketches. But this description must be qualified by the fact that Arcadian Adventures is Juvenalian only in the anger and disgust that it conveys, and not in its method which is, as always, irony rather than Juvenalian invective. It differs from his earlier book in that here the irony is heavier, unrelieved by any lighter touches beyond the comic misfortunes of its protagonists. Like Marc Anthony eulogizing Caesar, Leacock simulates coolness and detachment in the presentation of his demoralized vision.

He also sets his plutocratic City in the United States, although its physical description is indebted to Montreal, with a university that resembles McGill set on Plutoria Avenue, which doubtless owes something to Sherbrooke Street. After the shocked reaction from Orillia over Sunshine Sketches, where he used easily identifiable Orillians as models for his Mariposans,[20] Leacock understandably refrained from setting his next book in Montreal or Toronto. Orillia never forgave

him for Sunshine Sketches; the reaction of any community identified with his mordantly satirized City can only be imagined, but it could hardly fail to reflect upon his image as a genial humorist.

Leacock could be gruff and intractable (one of his highly organized files was labelled "LETTERS FROM DAMN FOOLS")[21] and he certainly had some keen insights into where society was heading, yet he consistently professed that humour was above negativism. "It has," he wrote in his Preface to Humour and Humanity, "the character of a leading factor in human progress, and . . . is destined still further to enhance its utility to mankind." On the other hand, he also wrote, in "The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice":

> An acquired indifference to the ills of others is the price at which we live. A certain dole of sympathy, a casual mite of personal relief, is the mere drop that any one of us alone can cast into the vast ocean of human misery. Beyond that we must harden ourselves lest we too perish. We feed well while others starve. We make fast the doors of our lighted houses against the indigent and hungry. What else can we do? If we shelter one, what is that? If we try to shelter all, we are ourselves shelterless.[22]

These positions -- the helpful and the hopeless -- must have been difficult for Leacock to reconcile. As a political scientist he was aware of the growth of a techno-industrial behemoth which values social relationships in terms of efficiency; as an academic, he felt that politics and science should be of immediate, practical use to mankind, rather than a hermetic science for professors whose own

vagueness and irrelevance was a recurring target throughout his writing. But as a conservative, he was deeply apprehensive of the effects of massive social change; "This socialism, this communism," he wrote, "would work only in Heaven where they don't need it, or in Hell where they already have it."[23] Leacock, then, recognizes the pressures for change, but it leaves him uneasy. As Cameron suggests, "Torn by the same conflicts that destroyed Victorianism, Leacock occasionally voices a fear that the destruction of Victorian values may mean the loss of all values; . . . for him, even an inadequate system is better than nothing."[24]

Thus it is not surprising to find in Arcadian Adventures an indictment of a new lifestyle, without the suggestion of any solutions or improvements. The bitterness in Arcadian Adventures stems directly from the conjunction of Leacock's conservatism with a pessimism that is nowhere else so economically or so fiercely expressed. As one English critic has noted: "is it not clear that Mr. Leacock is in love with the old order of things for what was good about it, and therefore wants to see it preserved?"[25]

As an anti-romantic attack upon the notion of human progress and the values of growth in the sleek, bustling metropolis, Arcadian Adventures could hardly be improved upon, within its limits. Leacock may not want to see the modern urban lifestyle destroyed, but he does want to lay bare its pretensions. His underlying indictment of this materialistic

vortex is found in its preoccupation with what must be termed reality and, as a related concept, the sense of an ulterior motive in all social interactions -- for the compulsion to constantly do business has become a pervasive social cancer. His theme, in the words of an unremembered economist, is that "the upper crust is just a bunch of crumbs stuck together with dough."

The denizens of his urban landscape have nothing of the "large simplicity"[26] of his own mind: rather, they possess "small complexities": everything about them is representational of something else. This tone is set at the outset when we are introduced to the quiet though purposeful activities along Plutoria Avenue, and see "expensive nursemaids wheeling valuable children in little perambulators."[27] The first indication of the pervasive anti-humanity of the City is found here, for we soon see that these children are not valuable in and for themselves, but for what they represent.

> Here you may see a little toddling princess in a rabbit suit who owns fifty distilleries in her own right. There, in a lacquered perambulator, sails past a little hooded head that controls from its cradle an entire New Jersey corporation. The United States attorney-general is suing her as she sits, in a vain attempt to make her dissolve herself into constituent companies. (1)

These "incalculable enfants" present a picture that is amusing and slightly disconcerting.

Leacock sets the scene very clearly and with great economy. It is focused around the Mausoleum Club which on

special occasions becomes "a veritable Arcadia" (2) for those who can afford it. The "Arcadian" in the title is of course ironic, as was the "Sunshine" in Sunshine Sketches, though the former lacks the subtlety of the latter title. However it does indicate that those who have most control over the City, who benefit most from its businesslike ethos, also need to retreat from it, by frequently leaving it, and by isolating themselves from "the tangled streets and little houses of the slums." (2) But it is not with sympathy that we hear of their ennui in a "singularly trying time of the year. It was too early to go to Europe, and too late to go to Bermuda. It was too warm to go south, and yet still too cold to go north. In fact, one was almost compelled to stay at home -- which was dreadful." (62) Before leaving the Club for their "well-earned repose" (3) the members have conducted big business under the guise of socializing, and debated such questions as "the awful growth of selfishness among the mass of the people." (3)

In the Club we meet Mr. Lucullus Fyshe, and through him learn something of its atmosphere of sales and swindles. Fyshe, self-proclaimed as "more or less a revolutionary socialist" (17) is a wheeler-dealer who berates the waiter for the temperature of his asparagus, while observing to his guest that "you'll live to see it that the whole working-class will one day rise against the tyranny of the upper classes, and society will be overwhelmed." (6) Yet when, at

his next meal, a strike disrupts the dinner, he is outraged. His dinner guest is an English peer from whom he is trying to extract a large investment. When he finds that the Duke is in town for the purpose of raising money, Fyshe quickly shuffles him off to one of his equally unscrupulous rivals. And so it goes. The incongruities of the refined degree of materialism that seems to occur only in the largest centres are brilliantly mocked. The pretentious and the fraudulent, forever seeking the most and biggest and newest of everything, all have something of the monomaniac about them.

Dr. Boomer, the president of Plutoria University, is spitefully presented in a portrait based on the observation that competence is easily feigned in a milieu where massive ignorance prevails. Boomer's commitment is not to education or scholarship, beyond the fact that pedantry makes a good front, but to quantitative goals in terms of the university as a corporation. Essentially he is a salesman and public relations officer for the university. But what more appropriate man to head a university which compares "favourably with the best departmental stores or factories in the City?" (39) The resemblance is more than physical: the university is no less willing to diversify to appeal to its market.

> The university taught everything and did everything. It had whirling machines on the top of it that measured the speed of the wind, and deep in its basements it measured earthquakes with a seismograph; it held classes on forestry and dentistry and palmistry; it sent life classes into the slums, and death classes to the city morgue. It offered such a vast variety of themes, topics, and subjects to the

> students, that there was nothing that a student was compelled to learn, while from its own presses in its own press-building it sent out a shower of bulletins and monographs like driven snow from a rotary plough. (39-40)

Organized religion was to Leacock at best a harmless social activity, at worst another charlatanism. Any religion more esoteric than Christianity (and he is almost as scornful of it) he seems to have considered a complete humbug, so he is being very contemptuous when he says that the university also lectures on "Confucianism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, with an optional course on atheism for students in the final year." (39)

University life and religion are two topics which almost invariably bring out the cynic in Leacock, often to telling effect, and always preceding from H. L. Mencken's position that "One horse-laugh is worth ten thousand syllogisms."[28] "The Yahi-Bahi Oriental Society of Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown" shows the advent of a fad religion into a monied and indolent circle of cultists in the book's only visit to the "idle rich" at home. Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown is understood to be a typical society matron, who seeks to amuse herself and her circle of hangers-on with only the trendiest <u>divertissements</u> -- even art, if it is of the fashionable sort. Herein Leacock voices the contempt of social register circles which was so well expressed by one of his own favorite writers, Mark Twain, who said that "the presence of only the Best People is enough to damn heaven."[29]

The Canadian (or is it mid-Atlantic?) quality of Leacock's satire, as detected by J. B. Priestley, is apparent here. Priestley said that "it expresses an essential Canadian quality. It is the humour of a nation that notoriously finds national self-expression not at all easy."[30] It moves, he said, "between sharply-edged satire on the one side and sheer absurdity on the other, being neither savage American wit nor entirely amiable English nonsense."[31] The plot (based on coincidence and unexpected reversals) and setting (the world of the "idle rich") are familiar to readers of P. G. Wodehouse, but its coldly ironic satire belongs to the tradition of Haliburton and Twain. Mr. Rasselyer-Brown, the socially awkward but diligent husband, is a familiar figure from Wodehouse, as is his dominating wife, who scorns the trade with which he supports her life as a social butterfly. "He was, as Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown herself confessed to her confidential circle of three hundred friends, a drag. He was also a tie, and a weight, and a burden, and in Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown's religious moments, a crucifix." (57) The pressures of his honest labours and his wife's browbeating turn Mr. Rasselyer-Brown to drink and, in one of Leacock's truest and funniest thumbnail sketches, we are told about his drinking:

> There was no excess about it. Mr. Rasselyer-Brown, of course, began the day with an eye-opener -- and after all, what alert man does not wish his eyes well open in the morning? He followed it usually just before breakfast with a bracer -- and what wiser precaution can a businessman take than

to brace his breakfast? On his way to business he generally had his motor stopped at the Grand Palaver for a moment, if it was a raw day, and dropped in and took something to keep out the damp. If it was a cold day he took something to keep out the cold, and if it was one of those clear, sunny days that are so dangerous to the system he took whatever the bartender (a recognized health expert) suggested to tone the system up. After which he could sit down in his office and transact more business, and bigger business, in coal, charcoal, wood, pulp, pulpwood, and woodpulp, in two hours than any other man in the business could in a week. Naturally so. For he was braced, and propped, and toned up, and his eyes had been opened, and his brain cleared, till outside of very big business, indeed, few men were on a footing with him.

In fact, it was business itself which compelled Mr. Rasselyer-Brown to drink. It is all very well for a junior clerk on twenty dollars a week to do all his work on sandwiches and malted milk. In big business it is not possible. When a man begins to rise in business, as Mr. Rasselyer-Brown had begun twenty-five years ago, he finds that if he wants to succeed he must cut malted milk clear out. In any position of responsibility a man has got to drink. No really big deal can be put through without it. If two keen men, sharp as flint, get together to make a deal in which each intends to outdo the other, the only way to succeed is for them to adjourn to some such place as the luncheon-room of the Mausoleum Club and both get partially drunk. This is what is called the personal element in business. And, beside it, plodding industry is nowhere. (59-60)

That perfectly placed description of the "two keen men, sharp as flint" is excellent as humour and as satire; it is worth volumes of Leacock's rather mechanical "funny pieces" and parodies. However Mr. Rasselyer-Brown, who does not have the casual sophistication of one who is to the manner born, is scorned by his wife's circle of leeches and phonies, who lionize the "sex-poet Mr. Siklsigh Snoop" (59); by the same perverted standards their daughter, the beautiful

but vacuous Dulphemia, is admired for her "remarkable character and intellect." (61) Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown, who sets the intellectual tone, has a sort of salon where

> One might see athletic young college men of the football team trying hard to talk about Italian music; and Italian tenors from the Grand Opera doing their best to talk about college football. There were young men in business talking about art, and young men in art talking about religion, and young clergymen talking about business. Because, of course, the Rasselyer-Brown residence was the kind of cultivated home where people of education and taste are at liberty to talk about things they don't know, and to utter freely ideas that they haven't got. (61-62)

It is never stated, but there is more than a suspicion that one of the things Leacock dislikes most about the highly urbanized being is his lack of humour, which allows the naturally pretentious and artificial quality of his existence to run rampant. As he wrote in an essay on Charles II,

> The man of real enlightenment is inevitably reckoned a trifler and is accused of shallowness and insincerity, while a dull man, heavily digesting his few ideas, is credited with a profundity he does not possess.[32]

Into the dull and marginally dyspeptic circle of Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown comes divine light in the persons of two con men, Mr. Yahi-Bahi, and his assistant Ram Spudd. Yahi-Bahi is actually from Missouri, but to the intellectually naive Plutorians is "so celebrated that nobody even thought of asking who he was or where he came from." (62-63) Yahi-Bahi is the self-proclaimed guru of "Boohooism," a religion so "esoteric . . . everybody remarked at once how infinitely superior the Oriental peoples are to ourselves." (63) After

one visit to their shabby apartment (which she finds "quite Eastern, in fact just like a scene out of the Koran" (63)). Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown sets up an "Oriental Society" of "some fifty or sixty of [her] more intimate friends." (66) The schoolboy mumbo-jumbo with which her group is bilked finds Leacock near the top of his form in its union of farce and irony (one of his favorite literary marriages). His coldly factual tone leads almost gleefully to the denouement when the two bunco artists attempt "a reastralization of Buddha" (71) that will concurrently cause the jewels and furs of their audience to "disappear." Their plot is foiled, in true Wodehouse style, by a clever servant -- their chauffeur is a detective. The only manifestation of a mysterious "presence" arrives in the inebriated person of Mr. Rasselyer-Brown, who enters the dimly-lit room in search of a bracer at the sideboard.

On the surface of the episode is the fun of pot-shots at the monied aristocracy, which has arrogated to itself the rights of a moral and intellectual aristocracy. The moral, according to Cameron, is "that the modern world claims to be unable to find faith enough to sustain religious belief, but believes by faith in the most astonishing nonsense of this kind."[33] Underlying it all is the feeling that civilization has moved into an era where appearances are the counters of highest value, that the inner life of man is not appreciated because it cannot be seen, and that public morality is the-

concensus of social opinion-leaders who have no opinions or thoughts of their own.

In the penultimate episode of the book (encompassing "The Rival Churches of St. Asaph and St. Osoph" and "The Ministrations of the Rev. Uttermost Dumfarthing") Leacock cynically strikes at the spiritual emptiness of his characters as he portrays Christianity as a business, without qualitative distinctions, and different from a fly-by-night operation like Yahi-Bahi's only in that it is established and legally constituted. But the two churches and their rectors are no less "upwardly mobile" (in the material sense) than the rest of the city's people and institutions.

The Episcopal church, St. Asaph's, has a spire which seems to its rector "to point, as it were, a warning against the sins of a commercial age." (101) Yet this church eventually merges with its Presbyterian rival along strict business lines, glossing over such dogmatic differences as "the theory of the creation, the salvation of the soul, and so forth" (134) and resolving "the existence of eternal punishment" (134) by "'a pro rata vote of all the holders of common and preferred stock'." (134-5) The merger is the result of a competition between the churches to attract "customers" to their preachers, who speak fire-and-brimstone damnation or sugar-coated panaceas as the audience demands.

Furlong, rector of St. Asaph's, is a fashion-conscious social gadfly, the sort of clergyman of whom it is said that

"to attribute any particular godliness to them, socially, was the worst possible taste." (14) His opposite number at St. Osoph's, Dr. McTague, errs too far to the opposite extreme: a hidebound traditionalist, who also lectures in philosophy at Plutoria University, McTeague concocts "a mixture of St. Paul with Hegel, three parts to one, for his Sunday sermon, and one part to three for his Monday lecture." (105)

Their Plutoria Avenue parishioners do not, of course, appear in need of counsel: "One might look the length and breadth of the broad avenue and see no sign of sin all along it." (108) One must look elsewhere: "Whatever sin there was in the City was shoved sideways into the roaring streets of commerce where the elevated railways ran, and below that again into the slums." (108) Along with sin, the slums were left behind in the wake of their successes: "Each of them had moved up by successive stages from the lower and poorer parts of the city." (102)

Like everyone else above the tracks, the members of St. Asaph's and St. Osoph's (the similarity in names indicates a contempt for their alleged differences) have really taken Mammon as their god; and they value the expensive for its own sake: when Dr. McTeague has a stroke because one of his students asks him a fundamental question, the trustees of St. Osoph's select Mr. Dumfarthing over worthier clerics asking a fraction of the stipend he demands. As their chairman says, most emphatically, "We do not want a cheap man." (119)

Rector Furlong's father is a Bible and church organ supplier who wants to bring out an entirely new Bible because the old one is "too heavy." His friend Lucullus Fyshe suggests the merger because it is being done all the time by organizations "from the Standard Oil Company downwards" although "One could hardly compare a mere church to a thing of the magnitude and importance of the Standard Oil Company." (130)

This episode is a good example of Leacock's technique. He presents ridiculous statements casually and confidently leaves the satiric transference of meaning to the reader. Sometimes he makes ambiguous statements and, again, is sure enough of the tone he has established to take the reader's understanding for granted. For example, he has Fyshe say, apropos of the church amalgamation, that "eternal punishment should be reserved for the mortgagees and bond-holders." (135) In the same way he has Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown compare her husband to one of her friends: "Put him, for instance, beside Mr. Sikleigh Snoop, the sex-poet, and where was he? Nowhere. He couldn't even understand what Mr. Snoop was saying." (59)

One critic, James Nichols, claims that this indirect, insinuative approach to satire -- which is so characteristic of Canadian satire as invective, after Sam Slick, is a rarity -- is its main stream and method. Defining satire as "the systematic exploitation, with aggressive intent, of what are, or are made to seem, deviations from the norm within a context,"[34] Nichols judges satire chiefly insofar as it

invites the reader's involvement in aggression through an appeal to "inside" knowledge; it is "a gauge of the intimacy with which the reader is carried along by, joins, the attack."[35] In Arcadian Adventures, Leacock's finest satire, most competent readers find themselves carried along in a state of ferocious glee. Presumably Leacock wishes his readers to react this way, for he is not concerned with being fair, except in a corrective sense.

Pathos, which he considers part of the highest reach of humour, is conspicuously missing here. The reason for its absence is simple: here he obviously does not care for the objects of his satire, as he did in Sunshine Sketches. He treats his characters not as people, but as examples of what can happen to people. His contrasting approaches to similar situations in Sunshine Sketches and Arcadian Adventures heightens the differences between them, and upon examination these incidents are remarkably numerous. It is almost as if he undertook to write two different books upon a single plan, which are distinguished chiefly in tone and setting.

The most prominent example is that of Tomlinson, "the Wizard of Finance," whose rags-to-riches-to-rags story parallels that of Jeff Thorpe in Sunshine Sketches -- with notable differences. Tomlinson, a simple farmer, goes (like Thorpe) from the bottom to the top of the economic scale without doing anything, and just as easily returns to his original position. When a geology professor discovers gold

on his land, he suddenly finds himself in the grip of a conglomerate, and earning a hundred thousand dollars a day. He becomes an instant hero, the financial papers describe his natural look of bewilderment as "unfathomable" (24) and "inscrutable" (25) and his success story, as Leacock sardonically remarks, "filled the imagination of every dreamer in a nation of poets." (24)

The conflict between Tomlinson's traditional rural values and those of the exploiters and manipulators is accentuated by the fact that he, unlike Thorpe, comes into direct contact with them. His refusal to give the top end of his farm to the mining company because his father is buried there is taken as further evidence of his financial acuity, instead of the plain truth, which it is. His values are constantly conflicting with those for whom the only value is expediency, who cannot accept the appearance of a fact as a fact because they are wholly concerned with false appearances.

Like Thorpe, Tomlinson makes the most errant mistakes on the stock market, but he makes spectacular gains on them. In his desire to get rid of the money he thinks of Plutoria University, but is too awed by its stature to presume upon the honour of being a donor. While soliciting a donation, Dr. Boomer and a colleague inadvertently add to his sense of inferiority by their ostentatious display of linguistic knowledge, which makes him feel unwanted, although if Dr. Boomer received money for a dig he would be eager enough to use it:

"If the size of the fortune troubled him, Dr. Boomer would dig him up the whole African Sahara from Alexandria to Morocco, and ask for more." (36) Tomlinson does not recognize that the university's goals are no different from those of any other business: size and power are their gods, and not the life of the spirit and intellect of man. For their part, the University representatives do not recognize his sincerity (having none of their own) and mistake his innocent inquiries for negotiations (for they understand only exploitation or quid pro quo). Thus Tomlinson innocently acquires an honorary doctorate of letters.

Inevitably, the bubble bursts. The geology professor finds that Tomlinson's holding contains only "fool's gold," the original sample having been planted on him by certain business interests. Sycophants like Fyshe, who so admired his inscrutability, now ridicule him unmercifully behind his back. In financial circles his reputation drops to nothing: "They not only questioned his honesty, but they went further and questioned his business capacity." (48) However, Leacock does not spare Tomlinson any pathos, even though he represents the "little man" caught in the machinery of big business. He has lost nothing ("the debit and credit account balanced to a hair" (55)) and his family is happier back in its familiar environment.

Other incidents that have parallels in Sunshine Sketches similarly show the great inhumanity of the metropolis.

The conventional romance of Peter Pupkin becomes the disastrous marriage of Peter Spillikins, who is swindled and cuckolded by a scheming older woman, after he has missed his chance with the only woman who really likes him. Edgar Allan Poe, whose Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket was noted as a source of De Mille's Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder, is probably an influence in "The Love Story of Mr. Peter Spillikins." Poe's story "The Spectacles" seems the basis for Leacock's because of identical plots: in both a man is seduced by a much older woman whom he cannot appreciate clearly as a result of poor eyesight.

Like all of Leacock's love stories, this one is a parody of melodrama. When expressing the tender emotions, Leacock seems to feel that melodrama is silly, but that he can't improve upon it, so he uses it as a basis for witty observations. But he wastes no pathos on Spillikins either, leaving him in blissful ignorance of his wife's true designs.

Even Dr. McTeague, who suffers a stroke, is considered dead immediately, written off in glowing terms by the newspapers, replaced in both jobs, regarded as mad in his efforts to recover, and finally, concluding that St. Paul and Hegel "both mean the same thing," (136) is returned to the pulpit after the ecclesiastic merger, is not pathetic, though his portrait is tinged with pathos. Like Dean Drone previously, McTeague has witnessed the loss of his church, and only partially regains his position after a stroke has caused

his mental capacity to be questioned. Also like Drone, he ends up no worse for it.

"The Fight for Clean Government" here is the fiercely bitter and pessimistic counterpart of the essentially good-natured election swindle of Josh Smith. Common to both is the replacement of a corrupt and incompetent representative or group by one equally bad, through election manipulation. The difference with the reform movement of the Mausoleum Club is that it is isolated from the mass of electors, so that it must tinker directly with the electoral system, rather than (albeit unfairly) influencing the voters through a deep understanding of how they are affected. The Arcadian Adventures reform in particular expresses Leacock's contempt for mass movements and a certain cynicism regarding the motives behind them.

The fight for reform, and the election which results, make up the final chapter of Arcadian Adventures, and it clearly exposes Leacock's view that man's systems and organizations are a product of man's nature -- so there is no reform possible without a reform in mankind. Cameron calls this book "Leacock's most pessimistic statement of the rapacity and cruelty and egotism in man's nature."[36] His pessimism appears to have gotten slightly beyond his artistic control in this chapter, for the satire is coarser and not so well managed as in the rest of the book; his reductio ad absurdum technique contains no surprises except that he could

find it credible to write that the reformist oligarchy would employ such obviously fascist tactics as keeping opposing voters from the polls with baseball bats and pickaxes. Here cynicism outweighs judgment, for the powerful "reformers," having co-opted the press and incumbent mayor, have no need of such tactics.

Of course the election "was a foregone victory from the first," (156) and the result "called forth cheer after cheer of frenzied enthusiasm." (149) The election is a fitting note of stasis to conclude the book, as the sense of constant movement without progression, which is one of satire's typical themes, is most appropriate to Leacock's vision of the metropolis. The stasis is emphasized by a brief epilogue to the final chapter, which concludes the day so enigmatically begun, and re-emphasizes momentarily again those poor whose lives never touch the world of the book, though they ominously surround it like the barbarians at the walls of the Roman Empire. It is interesting that they should do so, for as Robertson Davies has written, "it seems at times as if [Leacock] were writing of Roman society during its decline."[37]

About Leacock's relation to satire as an evolving tradition in Canadian literature, there is little that can be claimed as direct influence by his predecessors. He regarded himself as being in the tradition of Twain and Dickens (upon both of whom he wrote books) and though he knew Haliburton's

work slightly (possibly at second hand) he little valued it. Claude T. Bissell says of him that "in his references to Haliburton, he is uniformly condescending and disparaging. Haliburton was a much better writer than Leacock thought he was, and Leacock had an affinity with him of which he was not aware."[38] Like Haliburton, Leacock tried through satire to locate the social, economic and cultural position of Canada vis-a-vis the fading glory of Britain and the headlong progressivism of the United States; both valued the close relationship with the latter as a neighbour and world leader, and both (though Haliburton was more committed) supported the Imperial connection for reasons of tradition and mutual benefit. Also common to both is the fondly corrective spirit in which they excoriate the follies of Canadians. That their authorial attitudes differed is a reflection of the differing times in which they lived: in Leacock's time -- the heyday of biographical criticism -- the author is the celebrity rather than his characters or mouthpieces. The narrative voice has become the personal authorial voice, and the author's attitude to his characters is as important as the attitudes which they reflect. Thus, "Leacock did not make use of a spokesman like Sam Slick to express his views about national traits. He is his own spokesman; we can see him smiling ironically or chuckling with enormous relish."[39]

It would be hard to prove that he had any affinities with McCulloch, as there is little room for speculation that

Leacock was even aware of the Pictou writer beyond the fact that a "Dean Drone" appears in both The Stenaura Letters and Sunshine Sketches, while the former's Peter Pumpkin is close to Leacock's Peter Pupkin, though only in name. Similarly with De Mille: the two writers appear to share only prolificity and professionalism, although De Mille preceded Leacock in his anti-romanticism. Two turn-of-the-century critics (J. D. Logan and D. G. French) attempted to make a case for De Mille as "the first of the Leacockians," but it is garbled and totally unconvincing.[40]

But what is interesting is not the lack of a tradition of conscious influence and imitation (which rarely reaches farther than the stale air of a literary cul-de-sac in any case), but the presence of a common thread of satirical tone and purpose that exists independent of the intentions of those who have unconsciously contributed to it. As we have seen, the tone is ironic -- chiding rather than splenetic. The purpose is corrective, proceeding from clear, strongly held beliefs, though beginning with De Mille's satire in Strange Manuscript, and seen even more clearly in Leacock, solutions to the problems are at best insinuated and likely not even attempted.

What Leacock has done in Arcadian Adventures is to loosen the reins of satire, to set aside the balancing effects of comedy and pathos, and to place himself at an ironic distance from something that is inescapably part of

his life. Cameron rightly states that there is "nothing affiliative" about Arcadian Adventures: "it is a book that believes in nothing."[41] It is also a seminal statement of distrust in the twentieth century and its notion of progress, a progress which is almost too successful as it is seemingly beyond control. Leacock once wrote that "the price paid for knowledge is the loss of the eye of innocence";[42] this could be the motto for a certain kind of twentieth century sensibility -- one that is expressed in both Sunshine Sketches and Arcadian Adventures.

Leacock has been questioned by more than one critic for his failure (if that is what it is) to have produced a novel. Cameron, for one, put the case very unfairly when he wrote, in the Journal of Commonwealth Literature, "The great question about Stephen Leacock, in its simplest form, is why a big talent wrote only small books."[43] The answer to that (assuming that we accept the statement, which I do not, and which Cameron's book on Leacock would indicate he does not either) was supplied by S. J. Perelman in a Paris Review interview:

> For the past thirty-four years, I have been approached almost hourly by damp people with foreheads like Rocky Ford melons who urge me to knock off my frivolous career and get started on that novel I'm burning to write. I have no earthly intention of doing any such thing. I don't believe in the importance of scale; to me the muralist is no more valid than the miniaturist.[44]

Perelman, it should be remembered, is one of those popular American humorists (Robert Benchley is another) who were much

influenced by Leacock.

Yet behind the critical self-flagellation implicit in Cameron's question there lurks the germ of an insight into the reason why Canadian satire has evolved as it has. It seems that the writing of a novel requires a certain psychic affiliative foundation which Leacock appears not to have had. Beyond the fact that he was a commentator rather than a fabulist (in Perelman's terms a miniaturist, not a muralist) Leacock had, perhaps, another reason for dealing with society largely at a distance and on the surface. It may be speculated that he did not engage in the sort of commitment and identity that produces novels because he felt himself constantly drawn from a soft-focused Mariposan past into a bitter Plutorian future. Yet though he did not identify with such a future, he grudgingly recognized its vitality as he deplored its anti-vitalism, for as Cameron notes,

> It is as though Leacock cannot see any feature of a thing without seeing its opposite. Arcadian villainy is wedded to energy and creativity; artistry is wedded to ruthlessness. Simplicity is the other face of stupidity, pedantry the other face of learning, a desire for beauty may lurk within acquisitiveness.[45]

As a result he produced, in Sunshine Sketches, a fond but noncommittal reminiscence, and in Arcadian Adventures, "a book that believes in nothing."[46] It is a measure of his achievement that both have a continuing audience and influence.

Paul Hiebert (1892-)

The two streams of satire that are found in Leacock's two major works have been influential, especially the milder Sunshine Sketches, whose satire is lightened by a fraternal sense of human imperfectibility. One writer who has followed in Leacock's wake is Paul Hiebert, whose Sarah Binks (1947), is an extended parody of execrable verse and equally bad criticism. Hiebert's critical biography of his mythical poetess, "The Sweet Songstress of Saskatchewan," is amusing but essentially lightweight, and it lacks a clear focus. Though clearly derivative of Leacock, it is less precise in its wittiness than Leacock at his best; neither does it, beyond the wonderfully absurd premise of its central character, establish a motivation for its satire -- and the apparent (if implicit) motivation behind it is what chiefly distinguishes satire ("militant irony" Frye has called it)[47] from comedy.

However, it to some degree merits its length, approximately 150 pages, by the sweep of related topics which are satirized. From a starting point of social and cultural incongruity produced in bringing the full weight of critical apparatus and academic mannerisms to bear upon a poet who is not only obscure but deservedly so, Hiebert ranges through cultural nationalism, the concept of artistic primitivism, and the value of certain kinds of critical exegesis. Basic to all this is a satirical perspective on the romanticism of rural life by both rural and urban people.

The story purports to be a critical biography -- following the usual methods -- of Sarah Binks, a native Canadian writer "who no longer needs any introduction to her growing list of admirers."[48] Seen in its true Canadian context, where even at present there are perhaps not a half-dozen writers who are household names, this is satire in itself. As the story proceeds, we learn of Sarah's life on a Saskatchewan farm, of her influences, such as Ole, the hired man, and Rover, her dog, of her writings, in chronological sequence, of how Saskatchewan took her to "its broad flat bosom" (48) and she gained sufficient recognition so that she didn't have to sell magazines to have her poems printed; we follow her career in winning the Wheat Pool Medal, followed not long after by her death from the mercury in a horse thermometer, occasioned by biting into a scotch mint while taking her own temperature. The story is simple, ridiculous, and serves as a hanger upon which Hiebert can set his cloak of satire.

It is a cloak that dissembles its exaggerated innocence behind a manner of high seriousness, in effect making a high burlesque of the whole idea of a Saskatchewan poetess of renown. This innocence is mainly a reflection of the narrator, a transparent critical medium who often reveals more than he seems to understand, who passes on insights without partaking of them, like the teacher Hiebert describes who "had the educator's peculiar genius for imparting

knowledge without himself assimilating it." (63)

So while our critic's methodology is straightforward, his interpretations and conclusions are often comically false; we are given an example of this almost immediately when he quotes the Hon. Windheaver's observation that "This Sarah seems to be something of a tin god around here," (26) and then writes "Something of a god! The tribute of a great statesman to a great artist and a great woman." (26) Hiebert makes absurd statements matter-of-factly; we read, for instance, of Steve Grizzlykick "a keen and ardent hunter, albeit a far-sighted conservationist in that he seldom actually killed his gophers unless in self-defence, but merely removed their tails . . . ." (50-51) We are told that "At right angles to Railway Avenue runs Post Office Street, so called because the post office was on this street before the last provincial election." (26) Our critic clearly suffers from the same innocent insularity as his subjects: Regina is termed "the Athens of Saskatchewan" (85) in one breathtaking critical bound, and he deduces that because Sarah called herself "a daughter of the Old South, it is now generally accepted that they came from South Dakota." (28)

His critical faculties are hardly what could be termed rigorous, for his pseudo-scholarly romanticism is as inappropriate as Sarah's romantically corrupt verse. "Here was the home of the coyote and the gopher," he writes, "the antelope still flaunted his lack of tail to the western

wind, and the pensive mosquito wandered unafraid." (27) He is also inclined toward the decrepit romanticism of the past:

> the coyote had vanished from the plains, and with the disappearance of these great herds, his last source of vitamin B gone, disappeared also the prairie Indian, a proud and picturesque figure in overalls and plug hat -- swept away before the ruthless march of civilization. (xvii)

Of Sarah's epic poem Up From the Magma he remarks that the labours of composition were great "as anyone must know who has undertaken to write a cubic foot of verse," (121) although he later admits that "the question of quality is always an important consideration where poetry is involved." (148)

Hiebert parodies obscure and irrelevant scholarship through his own comments (for he assumes the role of the narrator/critic, as his signed Introduction indicates) as well as the sources he cites like Professor Marrowfat (Professor Emeritus of English and Swimming at St. Midget's College), Professor Dumplin (who calls one poem "'the finest sea song ever to come out of the dry belt,'" (38)) and Miss Rosalind Drool. The last critic may even have gone beyond research into the addition of some verses to a Binks poem, for Marrowfat can't decide "which is Binks and which is Drool." (127)

The Binksian oeuvre, if not all Drool, is certainly drivel of a high order. It satirizes the banalities of the Edgar Guest or Greeting Card school of verse in its romanticizing of mundane realities, particularly in a rural context; it also satirizes the banal thought processes which a

person goes through in the production of such verse, because the poet's thought processes in composition are usually more in evidence than their ostensible objects. This is shown in "The Genius":

> I'm a genius, I'm a genius,
> What more can I desire,
> I toot upon my little flute,
> And twang upon my lyre;
>
> I dabble in oil paint,
> In cinnebar and ochre,
> All night I am dissipated,
> And play poker.
>
> In my little book, in my little book,
> I write verses,
> Sometimes they don't rhyme --
> Curses! (46-47)

In depicting Sarah's career Hiebert seems to be on the verge of making a comment about the colonial mentality in our literature -- but he never quite makes it, because her "'good bad'" (x) poems parody both good and bad poetry in one inseparable mixture, and because he gives no direct suggestion of "literary" influences. But what literary influence could produce a word like "hurricale" (103) or a rhyme like "whits" and "petite"? (55) Or this exaggerated parody of the romantic lover's token:

> And I, who drank of life's abounding measure,
> Shall hold your token as a thing apart --
> The sandwich that you gave me I shall treasure,
> And wear it always closest to my heart. (54)

And surely no literary influence can be blamed for that remarkable conceit, "the entrance of Caesar into Saskatchewan" ("Yep, that's Caesar -- just like his pictures!"). (131)

The problem here is that the satirical contempt manifested in the use of stock devices seems directed solely at their unsophisticated application by rural people. What is often satirized is not the maudlin romanticism of stock situations and devices but the fact that they are used by Hiebert's stereotypically uneducated rural people; this, as one might say, is "putting the cart before the horse," for the apparent purpose of this satire is to show the absurdity of such romanticism by placing it in an unusual and exaggerated setting. It is not only in the poems that this infrequent but inartistic contempt surfaces: the "artistic touches" that "mark the aesthetic discrimination of the "home" (29) of Sarah Binks are two illustrated calendars. And Hiebert's description of a farmer is condescending:

> Kurt Schwantzhacker was a dirt farmer of the better class, independent to the point of obstinacy. His farm supported him in all things even to the extent of a species of wild rhubarb of which he harvested a small crop every year in the belief that it was tobacco. (42)

At such moments as these, when manner is maintained at the expense of matter -- and they are understandable as the result of the pressures involved in writing a full-length "satire" -- Hiebert gives the impression that he is using an anti-aircraft gun on sitting ducks.

Most of Sarah's mortal verse is silly rather than pointedly satirical; what satire there is generally mocks poor verse, a dubious satirical enterprise at best. As

Hiebert writes,

> Hers was the pastoral simplicity of the plains, hers the gentle dust storm, the dying calf, the long, somnolent afternoon of the drought summer. Give her a field mouse, a grasshopper, or a jam pail of potato bugs and her poetry gushed forth unbidden, uncalled for, and unrestrained. (45)

Thus, the first two verses of "The Farmer and the Farmer's Wife":

> The farmer and the farmer's wife
> Lead frolicsome and carefree lives,
> And all their work is but in play,
> Their labours only exercise.
>
> The farmer leaps from bed to board,
> And board to binder on the land;
> His wife awakes with shouts of joy,
> And milks a cow with either hand. (68)

This, however, succeeds as satire, as it amusingly recreates the antiseptically romantic view of farming which is often held by those who have no experience of it. The theme is satirically undercut in another poem:

> The farmer is king, oh, the farmer is king,
> And except for his wife and his daughter,
> Who boss him around, he runs the thing,
> Come drought, come hell or high water. (xviii)

In "Wash Out on the Line," overstatement achieves the same effect for the unromantic activity of drying the laundry:

> The sun is bright, and once again it's Monday,
> And on each line the apron and the undie,
> And tablecloth and towel adorning fence,
> Tell family history and the week's events
> In simple code, that he who runs, may read,
> For passing fancy or his neighbour's need;
> And changing calendar of underthing,
> Remarks the winter or announces spring: (146)

As these poems show, mundane reality can be trivialized rather than enlarged by being fitted into "poetic" molds, and the

fantastic and realistic are not easily united. But their only real satiric point would seem to be that such poor writing is a part of our literary tradition, a hangover, perhaps, from the colonial Victorian mentality which prompted an early trooper of the North-West Mounted Police to remark, "In Canada there are no barmaids: society is not sufficiently educated for them."[49] Edward McCourt writes in The Canadian West in Fiction of those Western writers who are usually ignored in the exhumation of our literary tradition, that

> the blight of genteel literacy is upon all their works; and over the prairie move Victorian dummies lifted straight out of the polite fiction of the Old Country, if anything a little more bloodless and refined than their originals.[50]

> But although the literature of the early Canadian West is of little merit, it is surprisingly abundant. There were Literary Societies in every town and a Sarah Binks on every stook.[51]

If this is Hiebert's point, it is not very well delineated.

Sarah's poems also include, seemingly incidentally, take-offs on better poets: "Horse" is a pastiche and parody of Blake's "tyger" and "lamb"; E. J. Pratt's epic style in Towards the Last Spike is appropriated (as are several of his lines) for the Binksian magnum opus, Up From the Magma; and A. E. Housman's A Shropshire Lad is mockingly echoed in "Death and Taxes." Edith Fowke has noticed other influences: "In 'The Sparrow' she catches the essence of Wordsworth; her 'Ode to Spring' excels anything of Keats," and "'Hiawatha's Milking' is obviously an improvement on the poetry of Longfellow."[52] Also included are several of Sarah's

"translations" from the German, which only show that while she tends to romanticize things that exist within her local context, she hopelessly misunderstands anything outside it. Her attempt at a folk ballad -- "They Arose" -- has more point, as it playfully exposes the ballad's typical terseness and morbidity.

Fortunately, however, Sarah's life and poems are by no means the whole of Hiebert's satire; of equal importance is the manner in which Hiebert presents his scholarly biography. Like Leacock a professor, for many years in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Manitoba, Hiebert delights in both mocking and directly ridiculing the foibles of academics. His critical comments have the ring of authenticity that could only have come from a practised academic pen, and one could perhaps extract from them a short list of basic mistakes for aspiring scholars. His critical comments tend toward the euphemistic:

> Here . . . her touch is unsure. "A onion, a lettuce" is weak, some of the lines do not quite scan, and her rhyming of "visible" with "contemplation" is not in the best traditions of Saskatchewan literature. (47)

His critical terms can be meaningless (like "Kantian-Ojibwayan" (77)) and he often uses slang:

> The inner eye, the inner nose -- it matters little with which faculty the poet is most endowed. To divine the future or to recreate the past was, for Sarah, all in a day's work. (124)

Literary effect can be mistaken for physical reality, as when he describes one poem as having a "throbbing, pulsating,

almost nauseating beauty," (49) or comments of another, "Sarah is not only deeply despondent but seems to be suffering from a bad cold in the head." (95)

Hiebert's critic persona can write in a tone that is inappropriately low ("Sarah rises on splendid wings and undoubtedly sets a new all-time record for lyrical height" (89)) or inappropriately high:

> Certainly the incident between Professor Marrowfat and the literary editor of the Farm and Fair, in which the latter is said to have kicked the Professor below the belt and from behind, exceeds the bounds of literary criticism. Nor can Professor Marrowfat's attempt to gouge the literary editor's eye be regarded as a contribution to scholarly research. (77)

He uses critical jargon to contradict the obvious: "Even her lines do not quite scan, although some maintain that with the art that conceals art Sarah has deliberately introduced into the second from the last line the extra half dactyl in order to emphasize the extra half foot." (98) But when he extends the use of jargon in regard to a person's academic record, the satire on university life and its minutiae is very effective:

> According to his own records, in which he tended to become confused and which tend accordingly to be unreliable, he had obtained a total of ten and a half units, fourteen credits, eleven and five-sixteenth pundits during the first term of the second half of the first division, and by transferring three digits from the diploma course to the degree course of the second division, he would have a total of twenty-three half-credits, which would entitle him to the degree of Jack of Arts, leaving six marklets, or one semi-microbe, which could later be counted towards the degree of Bachelor of Arts. (62-63)

This is so like Leacock that it could surely be mistaken for the work of Hiebert's satirical master. Hiebert makes no attempt to disguise his debt to the author of Sunshine Sketches. In a footnote he borrows the name of "Ram Spud" and writes "(apologies to Leacock)" (69) though whether it is for the use of the name or for mis-spelling it -- the original had two "d's" -- is not made clear. While Ram Spudd appears as Yahi-Bahi's assistant in Sunshine Sketches, he probably influenced Sarah Binks more from his appearance in Leacock's Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy, in a parody of modern poetry and poets entitled "Ram Spudd: The New World Singer".[53] Hiebert uses another familiar Leacock name, Pupkin, as a Russian poet, which is perhaps meant as a critical slip for Pushkin.

These minor references are not adduced to prove Hiebert's dependence upon Leacock, for the similarities are unmistakable; the writing style of Sarah Binks is clearly modelled on Leacock's use of parody and casually stated incongruities. The burlesque of academics, and the exposure of the mild pretensions of rural people who imitate forms they do not appreciate recalls Leacock, but Hiebert's targets are not as well focused. It is hard to determine if he primarily means to ridicule the forms of poor poetry and criticism, or the people who he depicts using them. If the former, then as the Literary History of Canada comments, "the author himself barely escapes the baleful eye of travesty."[54]

If the latter, it is difficult not to accuse the author of a ponderous contempt which, however, contradicts the generally affectionate tone of the piece.

Thus, if it can be said of Hiebert's attitude to his characters, as A. L. Wheeler has done, "he loves them while he mocks them" -- Hiebert's critic even echoes Leacock's critics[55] -- it must also be said that he does not make it obvious just who is being mocked, and why. Sarah and her works are of course a high burlesque of bad poetry (because it is treated as good poetry), and the academic framework is a low burlesque of criticism (because it weightily considers the ephemeral) but the satiric thrust lacks a clear and coherent focus. Parodying that which is itself already a parody is a difficult, unnecessary art, and one which demands an extremely light touch; Hiebert does not quite manage it over the extended length of a piece structurally based on the typical fifteen or twenty page Leacock parody. Sarah Binks must therefore be judged an amusing book that followed Leacock too closely and too far without capturing the sense of purpose of the original.

Earle Birney (1904-)

Despite its literary quality, Leacock's satire in Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich has not inspired anything like the imitation of his lighter style that is behind Hiebert's Sarah Binks. Probably the closest approximation

of satire in this mode, before Mordecai Richler, is Earle Birney's Turvey (1949). But it does not come very close to doing with the military what Leacock did with the "idle rich," perhaps because underlying it is a sense of the author's indecision about what kind of sensibility will direct it, whether reportorial or imaginative; as a result, the book falls between these two stools, and the satire is promising but inchoate.

Earle Birney, Turvey's creator, is best known as a poet and teacher, but he has also written two novels, Turvey and Down the Long Table (1955). The latter novel, despite the claims of D. J. Dooley, can not be considered a satire, or even significantly satirical.[56] The conflict between the youthful Marxist commitment of the protagonist, Gordon Saunders, and his desire to whitewash his past before a McCarthyite Congressional investigation has satiric potential -- indeed, its psychological probing anticipates the direction satire has recently taken. But it is not a satire because, despite the chapter break montages a la Dos Passos, his essential conflicts are never heightened or focused, only grappled with, in what is a curiously dated and affected apologia pro vita sua.

Birney's wartime experiences as a Personnel Selection Officer (PSO) were the basis for Turvey. Subtitled "a military picaresque," it is an account of the adventures of one Private Thomas "Topsy" Turvey, whose efforts to make a

meaningful contribution to the Canadian military effort in the Second World War are frustrated more by the army bureaucracy than by his own considerable simplemindedness. Birney has never made much claim that Turvey is a satire, though he has called it "a satirical picaresque."[57] Yet it begins rather forcefully as a satire before settling, somewhat loosely, into a succession of war stories that shift jarringly from farce to pathos.

The book opens with Turvey writing the first of many psychological aptitude "O-tests". It is soon clear that this initially Chaplinesque "little man" does not fit the Procrustean bed of the army's personnel categories. Despite his best intentions, Turvey's recruitment is a series of snags, and understandably so considering that his background is mainly a number of transient labouring jobs, like "choker," "scurfer," "pouncer," "popsicle-coater" and "assistant flavour-mixer."[58] As an eternal naif before the common denominating procedures of the army, Turvey's simplicity and earnestness lead him into error. He scores poorly on his first O-test because he takes the questions too seriously, instead of giving the easy, obvious answers.

The oft-repeated O-test and sundry corollary psychological investigations made of "square peg" Turvey symbolize the ritualistic pointlessness of much of the military's bureaucratic baggage, for despite the number of times Turvey is tested they never learn anything significant

about him: the O-test is really a "zero-test". In addition, his records are always being accidentally destroyed, or lost in transit.

In the early, satirical part of the book, Turvey's tests reveal more about the testers and the machinery through which they operate than they do about him. One of his interviewers is described as having a "mind like a paint-brush, slicking everybody up to look the same." (21) This description, coming from another personnel officer, reflects the competitive jealousy among PSO's; however this latter officer, a Lieutenant Smith, is no better than the man he criticizes: he reports that Turvey "'comes from a broken and not altogether happy family.'" (26)

It is interesting that no two interviewers elicit the same diagnosis from their repeated tests. Each PSO has a unique theoretical framework and adheres to it rigidly -- though the differences are mainly in the jargon used. Thus, Turvey is variously diagnosed as having not enough intelligence for the infantry, "intelligence higher than that of some officers," (30) neurosis, the condition of a "constitutional psychopath," an "emasculation obsession" and an "Oedipus complex." Towards the end of the book he is interviewed by a personnel sergeant, professionally known as "Rama, the Seer of Destiny" (233) who tests him on the bases of astrology, palmistry and graphology; finally he registers at the genius level on the O-test he has written so often and his tester

thinks he has made a discovery:

> He had read of such cases; men with tremendous IQs, really brilliant, but unable to show even an ordinary amount of brains, except through accredited psychological scorings such as the O-test, because of profound emotional illnesses, deep-seated inferiority feelings or the like, going back to, well, almost to the womb. Why he might even have a real psychosis -- in an early stage, of course. It would be wonderful if he spotted something like this here. And quite possible. All those smug medicos and alleged psychiatrists piling up reports on this fellow for three years, and not one of them with the intuition to penetrate into the real trouble. (284)

The satire is of course aimed at the bureaucratic belief that the irreducible can be translated into the formalities of standardized psychological tests, and that the nature and weaknesses of soldiers can be determined by other men, who are equally fallible, and who are also shoehorned into the system. The PSO's own neuroses and their mutual competitiveness get in the way of their estimations of individual soldiers like Turvey. But Birney also sympathizes with these officers, for whom "the war was a silent inky battle against forms." (60) A similar, seemingly useless struggle is waged by other officers:

> When the officers were not inspecting posts or drilling their scarecrow platoons into some kind of recognizable order for the unpredictable visits of the brigadier, they were pressed into the elaborate routine of defending or prosecuting their own soldiers in courts-martial. What with AWL's, desertions of guard posts, donnybrooks, and conversions of army property, the unit averaged four of these full-dress affairs a week, not to speak of the time consumed in representing soldiers in the toils of civilian law for thefts, burglaries, assaults, rapes and the odd murder. Whenever there was a lull, most of the officers wangled leave and those who couldn't got drunk. (60)

Turvey, who initially envies the prestige of being an officer, is soon persuaded that the common soldier's lot is better, and

> He began to feel sorry for all sergeants and staff-sergeants and sergeant-majors and lieutenants he had met. Come to think of it, few of them ever did seem very happy, except maybe when they were swacked. He tried to remember what the really high officers looked like, but he hadn't seen any of them close up so far. (90)

The satirical point made about the military bureaucracy is that it distances most of its functionaries from their work, their objectives, and from each other. Turvey's bright blank face is a mirror which reflects the preoccupations of the bureaucracy back at itself, particularly in the first third of the book. Although he is unfailingly cheerful and co-operative, Turvey usually manages to project the opposite impression he is trying for: he invariably grins when he is nervous, and his sincerity is so simple that he is often considered insubordinate because of it.

Not only does he often seem the opposite of what he is, but Turvey usually gets the opposite of what he wants. On the face of it, his objective to be an infantryman would not seem to present insuperable difficulties. His secondary objective, to serve with the Kootenay Highlanders, cannot be realized because that regiment disbands in Halifax, but this event, occurring little more than a third of the way through the book, does not lessen his determination to reach "the Sharp End" and get into battle. Yet in spite of the diligence with which Turvey pursues his goal, and despite the massive bureaucracy

set up to get him into battle, he reaches the front only momentarily before being sent back to "the Blunt End".

Turvey's story is a record of administrative bungling and what in peacetime would be considered criminal mishandling by the army. On his first day in recruitment camp, he and others are sent over a condemned assault course because of a personal conflict between two of their superiors. Turvey suffers an ankle fracture; some of the others suffer worse. As a result, he spends most of his basic training period in hospital. Later, he is released as a diptheria patient without a proper medical check, and is soon back in a hospital bed with palatal paralysis.

When he is not hospitalized, or in detention for his many transgressions, Turvey spends most of his time being shipped from place to place, and usually to the wrong place. An administrative fumble keeps him and his friend Mac MacGillicuddy from joining the D-Day invasion force in England; instead, they are shipped out for officer training. Consequently, "his first wound on operational duties" is "a nasty cheek scratch from the stem of an apple hurled too joyfully at the jeep" (170) he is driving through a liberated village in Belgium. But Turvey is not a special case in terms of being frustrated at getting into battle: he meets a sergeant who has been waiting in England almost four years, "fightin Hitler from a Buckingham castle." (146)

Contrary to the view of Arnold Edinborough in his

review of Turvey for Queen's Quarterly, Turvey does not really "fight the army system that prevents him from fighting the enemy."[59] Aside from the usual soldierly complaints, he accepts things as they are. In the initial section of the novel, set in Canada, his willing acceptance of everything the army visits him with satirically points up the absurdity of some of its methods and assumptions. When the scene shifts to the European theatre of war, Turvey is caught up in the sweep of incidents, so that instead of being a mirror reflecting the army back at itself, he becomes merely a lens that allows all events to pass through it -- in rather soft focus -- and the book becomes more like a travelogue than a picaresque. Desmond Pacey would seem to be in agreement here: he includes Turvey in a group of novels written in the forties that he terms "primarily topical journalism cast in the form of fiction."[60]

It is unfortunate that the whole of the satirical element in this book is found in the theme of bureaucratic muddleheadedness as stated in the early Canadian section. It is never developed, not even in the static or circular patterns that are so frequently found in satire, and the repetition of scrapes, tests, detentions, and embarcations is finally monotonous rather than incremental in effect. The reason for this is that the focus of the book changes from Turvey's ingenuous perceptions of the army's mad mechanism of war, to what Claude Bissell has called "a succession of

fabliaux,"[61] using a lightly fictionalized documentary style to focus on the events themselves. Turvey is then merely the centrepiece for what are in effect a collection of barrack-room ballads, intercut by some fine impressionistic prose (as in the opening of chapter seventeen) that seems inappropriate to the tale of a comic stereotype.

Admittedly, the picaresque "is interested in action rather than psychology, in comic stereotype rather than personality."[62] But Birney's lack of consistency in this regard makes it hard to disagree with the late B. K. Sandwell's assessment that "Mr. Birney calls the book a picaresque novel, which lets him out of all need for plot and gives him unlimited license for situations and characters."[63] While the plot is conventionally completed with the triumph of Turvey's love affair, his release from the hospital at war's end in England, and his eventual discharge into "Civvy Street" (286) in Canada, the satiric spirit that promised much in the first few chapters has long since been dissipated into nothing, and, with the exception of a few comic set pieces, what happens in between is neither stimulating nor memorable. Many events seem to spring from a spirit of documentary fidelity rather than picaresque exuberance, the numerous Personnel Officers blend together through repetition, and Turvey's romance with Peggy is unconvincing -- patently a way to give the book some shape once his limited, innocent awareness of army life has been dropped as the book's motivating force, and it has

become a series of rather disconnected episodes.

Mac, who Birney tells us was introduced into the book as a major, complementary figure -- to play Don Quixote to Turvey's Sancho Panza[64] -- is delineated by a breezy manner of speech and little else. One of the book's least memorable characters, he serves as a deus ex machina in most of his appearances -- but not primarily for Turvey, who muddles through well enough on his own. It is Birney the confused novelist rather than Turvey the confused soldier who is served by Mac's presence somewhat in the way "Jeeves" has served Wodehouse, although Mac does not approach the ultimate butler in memorability or effectiveness. Mac is clearly plotted, perhaps too clearly, but he is never really brought into the story (or stories). The character of Mac, like the satire, is not developed to the level the reader expects; when Turvey receives news of his death at the front, in what could be the novel's climax if it had one, "his death," as Frank Davey has written, "is curiously given much less emphasis than many of Turvey's debauches."[65]

Dr. Birney has defended his book against the charge that it is too obviously the work of an academic by citing his own war experience (he was discharged with the rank of major, having enlisted as a private) as evidence that Turvey was drawn from real life:

> He'd crystallized in my mind out of a number of people: a lovable batman I once had; scraps of memories of those hundreds of youths I had interviewed or with whom I'd shared the wards of army

> hospitals. And Turvey had emerged also out of myself, out of all my own well-intentioned stupid boners as a soldier, and my own comedies and near-tragedies and loves and hates and fears in the king's uniform.[66]

It is, I think, hard to escape the judgment that Birney's "succession of incidents half-farcical, half-serious"[67] is too much the work of memory rather than artistic imagination. He has made the revealing comment that his work is "accurate enough to pass unchallenged by the other old sweats (who have been, from the start, the chief readers and buyers of Turvey)."[68] The documentary style of writing that begins to dominate at the time of Turvey's arrival in Europe may appeal to some "old sweats" for its nostalgia value, but it is jarring for readers who notice the evaporation of satirical intention (or invention), as a promising satire degenerates into a generally tedious farce, interrupted by moments of pathos when the effects of war are briefly recognized. The writing in the impressionistic documentary passages is mostly of a very high order, but they are so out of context with the general tone of the book that their disconnectedness makes them appear perfunctory.

Bissell has noted that "Some of the incidents are patently contrived and depend too boldly upon barrack-room farce."[69] These incidents, which I take as the series of Turvey's misadventures cast in the "Sad Sack" mold, are in a sense another kind of documentary from the impressionistic writing of Europe at war: they seem to be scraps from the barracks-bag of war stories, told in the forgiving light of

recollected camaraderie. Birney has doubtless won the approval of many an "old sweat" for his attempt to tell their story, but in the final analysis he opts for a nostalgic romanticism of the war rather than the anti-romanticism that the first ninety pages or so nicely develops. Turvey's war experience is recounted largely as a series of amusing incidents, without a second level of meaning that would imply something about how people operate in a modern war, and perhaps even why they are there at all.

Unlike his admitted influence, Jaroslav Hasek's The Good Soldier Schweik, and also unlike the more recent satirical war novels of Joseph Heller and Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Birney's Turvey neither gains nor stimulates such awareness. Even after the sudden death of his best friend, Turvey's consciousness is never developed beyond the level of "you gotta have a war or they wouldn't have no army for you to join." (134) The satire seems literally to have missed the boat: nowhere in Europe is his innocence given even the limited satirical context of such Canadian events as his court-martial. (He is court-martialed for going absent without leave to Buffalo with his friend Ballard for almost a month). The rigidly hierarchical nature of the army is lightly satirized in Turvey's perception of the Colonel who is his judge:

> the colonel's eyes, behind thick rimless spectacles, looked remarkably like those of a trout, and Turvey unaccountably remembered what Calvin Busby had said about the army being a fish hatchery. This colonel

> looked about the room with the calm unwinking orb of the fish that knows itself several sizes bigger than any other in his tank. A big plump Dolly Varden swimming in a pool of documents, Turvey decided, with a Sam Browne belt and a bright row of buttons for belly stripes; the two redtabs were his gills. The way his cheeks sloped into a tiny chinless mouth was fish-like too. (69)

The only episode that approaches the satire of a Vonnegut or Heller is, again, very early in the book. Turvey's first camp commandant gives a morale-boosting lecture that is a parody of the splenetic rhetoric of Hitler, and of stereotyped German leaders in general.

> He told them how important training was and how they were the glorious soldiers of democracy, but soldiering meant discipline too and fitness, because they had to be ready to wipe the Huns off the face of the earth. At first the colonel stood at attention and spoke as if he had it all memorized but when he began to talk about the Germans his voice grew dramatic and he hissed. "You men have got to start <u>hating</u>," he shouted, and his fat face reddened. He went on excitedly about the crimes of the German Nation in this war and the last. Turvey, who had grown very hot in his battle-dress and pack, and was envying the colonel's sleeveless shirt and khaki shorts, reproached himself for not paying attention. He tried to start hating, but his feet ached and his steel helmet kept slipping over one ear. "Rrruthlessss," the colonel was shouting, "absolutely rruthlesss, if need be." His round knees quivered as he stamped his feet. "I tell you, men, frankly, I would be proud, yess <u>proud</u>, if at the end of this war I was one of those ordered to sshoot down every ssurviving German, man, woman and -- <u>and</u> child." (37)

This is an interesting view of the interchangability of war leaders, who have approximately the same mentality regardless of which side they're on, and perhaps also a recognition that there is little that we can claim for moral superiority. But that is the only example of such a

consciousness, or the beginnings of such a consciousness, in this book; while Vonnegut sets Slaughterhouse-Five around the fire-bombing of Dresden, Birney seems content to entertain the "old sweats."

It would be presumptuous to suggest that Birney should have written two books, a satire and a journalistic reminiscence, from the materials that went into Turvey, but it is merely stating the obvious to say that it displays the interference of two sensibilities. I suggest that this interference is responsible for what Hugo McPherson, writing in the Literary History of Canada has termed the "uneasy heartiness"[70] of its laughter. Certainly the book is not, as Malcolm Lowry fulsomely proclaimed, "a classic" and "a masterly satire."[71] In terms of satire at least, it must be termed a disappointment, because Birney shows that he knows his subject, and that he could do it justice in comic, satiric, or realistic terms. It remains, therefore, no more than a promising failure in the sense I am discussing it, because Birney does not resolve his approach to the subject in a prose style that commutes between imaginative exuberance and documentary fidelity.

Robertson Davies (1913-)

What now appears to have been the inevitable union of satire with the romance in a Canadian setting did not occur in any significant sense before the nineteen fifties. When

it did appear it was in a trilogy, the "Salterton novels" of Robertson Davies, Tempest-tost (1951), Leaven of Malice (1954), and A Mixture of Frailties (1958).

Robertson Davies is a writer whose wit and cultivated powers of observation have produced notable satire in forms as diverse as the newspaper column, the play or masque, and the satirical romance. Born, appropriately enough, in an Ontario community called Thamesville, Davies is a clear example of British cultural and literary influence, which shows up in his writing in its reflection of such writers as Johnson, Smollett, Meredith, and Shaw. After preliminary education at Upper Canada College and Queen's University, he studied at Oxford and acted in minor roles at London's Old Vic Repertory Theatre. Since returning to Canada in 1940, his writing has been prolific and varied, and he has achieved success in many fields -- as Literary Editor of Saturday Night, as editor of the Peterborough Examiner, as a noted playwright with six published plays or collections of plays to date, as a critic who has published a collection of essays on reading, A Voice From the Attic (1960), and as a novelist who besides the three "Salterton" books has recently published Fifth Business (1970) and The Manticore (1972), both excellent novels, the former being, in my opinion, one of the finest in our literature. While the last two novels have directed themselves to psychological explorations of character rather than satire, it is

satire that has largely informed his previous work in fiction, plays, and, originally, in the books of Samuel Marchbanks, the dyspeptic diarist and stout-hearted curmudgeon.

Before considering the Salterton books it is necessary to briefly consider the themes and approach of Davies' pseudonymous Marchbanks persona, for he pithily states many things that are dramatically stated in the novels, and also because he is a satirist of stature, despite the general transitoriness of his medium, the periodical essay. The character and opinions of Samuel Marchbanks first appeared on the editorial page of the Peterborough Examiner during Davies' editorship. His crusty opinions, so superior to the run-of-the-mill navel-gazing columnist, attracted such a wide readership that his columns were collected, amended, and expanded to become The Diary of Samuel Marchbanks (1947), The Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks (1949), and Samuel Marchbanks' Almanack (1967). Marchbanks' subject matter is taken from day-to-day observations of people, but he manages to invest them with a robust wit that is frequently satirical. Simon Paynter, writing in the Canadian Forum, has well characterized his appeal:

> Davies-Marchbanks brings to bear on these old ingredients the full force of culture, style, and vigour; not as a superior artist dabbling in a minor medium, like a Metropolitan bass singing nursery rhymes, but with the serious concentration which is necessary for the production of great humour.[72]

Whether he is represented as a diarist, an after-dinner speaker, or a horoscope-caster, Marchbanks is always reflective, sometimes whimsical, and occasionally caustic. He is a cultural aristocrat who reads Ciceriân orations to his coal-furnace, with which he has a running feud. He recalls "J. S. Mill's warning that a country where eccentricity is a matter for reproach is in peril,"[73] and flaunts his own mild eccentricities with suggestions for social improvement, such as shoving "red-hot gramophone needles" (D, 27) under the nails of babies, on the theory that cruelty rather than kindness is what makes children successful adults. Marchbanks fairly gloats over his individuality: at one point he says "This is sheer cantankerousness, and I glory in it." (T, 113) "Marchbanks" as Hugo McPherson has noted, "[is] at once the apostle of intelligence, the champion of live-and-let-live eccentricity and the defender of the principle that ideas, like mothers-in-law, are to be entertained rather than maintained."[74]

Like Leacock, Hiebert, and Birney, Davies (through Marchbanks) operates from an anti-romantic stance, even to the point of signing a letter in the Almanack "Yours unromantically". (A, 8) He complains about the joyless industry of twentieth century man, remarking that "the ultimate in civilizations is that of the ants, who work ceaselessly, and have no fun at all." He concludes by saying that "an ant's face under a microscope" looks "exactly

like a photograph of Henry Ford." (D, 96-7) On the question of the proper age for retirement he is equally scornful:

> Many people, of course, compromise in this matter: they continue to work physically as long as they can, but they retire mentally at a very early age (sometimes as young as 14) and live on their small intellectual capital for the rest of their lives. (D, 162)

Then there is his amusing reflection on the theme that a society can be understood by its addictions:

> Drug addiction is horrible, addiction to drink is pitiable, but to be a slave of the salted-nut habit is to be lost indeed. Years ago I realized my weakness in this respect, and vowed never to set tooth to salted nut again as long as I lived. But tonight I visited the home of my friend X (a prominent prohibitionist, by the way) and turned as white as a blanched almond when I saw the nut-dish at his elbow. It was obvious from the dry, salty tone of his voice that he had been hitting the cashews pretty hard, and as we talked he ate bowl after bowl of the insidious dainties. His wife (in rags, and barefoot, for their home and fortune had been ruined by his vice) patiently filled the bowl whenever it was empty. Once, however, when she attempted to take a fat filbert from his hand, he struck her brutally across the mouth. I walked home sadly, determined to urge the government to take over the salted nut industry -- vile traffic! -- not for profit, but for control. (D, 10-1)

The same subject is brought up again in response to letters attesting that nuts are usually eaten in moderation; however, Marchbanks vows "not to be deterred in my war on salted nuts by such letters as these, or the insidious propaganda of the nut-gorged press." (D, 29-30)

The catholicity and amusing anti-romanticism of his viewpoint are well illustrated by the following digression from a pensee on corsets:

> I have heard military historians say that the reason Wellington beat Napolean was that the English officers had stronger corsets than the French, and thus were able to sit longer in the saddle. If this is so, the battle of Waterloo was not won on the playing fields of Eton, but in the rubber plantations of Malaya, the whalebone mines of the Arctic, and the canvas deposits of Liverpool. If Napolean had had a first-rate corset, what might the fate of Europe have been? (D, 5)

His anecdotes draw on a range of experience and a gift for the economical phrasing that is so necessary to witty writing -- for example:

> I may tell you that as I made my way to Prestwick, I passed the Johnny (sic) Walker distillery, and the works of Shanks of Barrhead, the great makers of sanitary pottery. "The Alpha and Omega of many a good party," said my companion, raising his hat respectfully. (A, 28)

From these examples it may be seen that while Pepys' diary, Boswell's Life of Johnson, and the periodical essays of Addison and Steele have been influential, he also bears some traces of kinship with another Sam, Haliburton's Clockmaker. Of course, he is enough in step with his times (and enough of a newspaperman) to avoid Sam Slick's gaseous prolixity. But unlike his progressivist Nova Scotian predecessor, Marchbanks professes to have little regard for the trappings of modernism, whether mechanical or social. "What kind of a world do I inhabit," he protests, "in which horses and cows are exotic rarities, and the combustion engine, that uncanny and devilish device, is taken for granted by the smallest child?" (A, 65) Furthermore, "It is dishonest to give children the notion that we are cleverer than our

ancestors in every respect. We make many things more easily than they, but not necessarily better." (A, 16) As the possessor of a cultivated, staunchly individual sensibility, he has little use for the principle that all men are equal. He says,

> I confess that I find the modern enthusiasm for the Common Man rather hard to follow. . . . But talk about the Common Man gives the yahoo element in the population a mighty conceit of itself, which may or may not be a good thing for democracy which, by the way, was the result of some uncommon thinking by some very uncommon men. (D, 125)

Much of the material in the Marchbanks books is over thirty years old, but has held up remarkably well withal, and it is rare to find a comment as dated as his lament for the passe popularity of the guitar -- "Nobody plays it much nowadays except radio cowboys . . . ." (T, 101)

The novels of Robertson Davies do not contain a character that closely resembles Samuel Marchbanks, but parts of him crop up here and there in characters, and in the authorial tone. The failures of imagination, cultural development and real education, for which Marchbanks indicts Canadians, are the subjects by which they are indicted by Davies in his Salterton novels. And since the first one, Tempest-tost, concerns the production of a play, it may be apropos to conclude this preparatory consideration of Marchbanks by appending his advice to the Canadian playwright, Apollo Fishorn:

> You want to be a Canadian playwright, and ask me for advice as to how to set about it. Well, Fishorn,

> the first thing you had better acquaint yourself with is the physical conditions of the Canadian theatre. Every great drama, as you know, has been shaped by its playhouse. . . .
>
> Now what is the Canadian playhouse? Nine times out of ten Fishorn, it is a school hall, smelling of chalk and kids, and decorated in the Early Concrete style. The stage is a small raised room at one end. And I mean room. If you step into the wings suddenly you will fracture your nose against the wall. There is no place for storing scenery, no place for the actors to dress, and the lighting is designed to warm the stage but not to illuminate it.
>
> Write your plays, then, for such a stage. Do not demand any processions of elephants, or dances by the maidens of the Caliph's harem. Keep away from sunsets and storms at sea. Place as many scenes as you can in cellars and kindred spots. And don't have more than three characters on the stage at one time, or the weakest of them is sure to be nudged into the audience. (D, 71)

It is clear, then, that Marchbanks uses realism to debunk romanticism. It is also clear, though it may not be patent from the examples I have given, that he himself indulges in a kind of "Golden Age" romanticism, which is somewhat similar to Leacock's: that is, he believes that life in the past had many beauties and advantages that are ignored by onrushing modernism. One of the great advantages of the past, of course, is that one can control and interpret it, and Marchbanks shows that he has a romantic filter which screens out much of the unpleasantness of the past. For him the past is a time when individualism was prized and encouraged, when education was not always pleasant but it was meaningful, and when life was more controlled and its pace more relaxed.

In the Salterton novels, while one can often detect

a fragrant whiff of pure Marchbanks, his perspective is but a part of the satirical view which Davies develops as a series of related problems in Canadian life, and then symbolically resolves. A trilogy is somewhat unusual in Canadian letters, although Mazo de la Roche, Ralph Connors, L. M. Montgomery and James De Mille, among others, have written series of novels. Davies' Salterton novels, as one critic has remarked, "are distinctive, especially in Canada, for being satiric novels in sequence."[75] Yet they are quite unequal, in style as well as quality. The themes initiated in Tempest-tost are developed more fully and skillfully in Leaven of Malice, while A Mixture of Frailties rather awkwardly tries to extend them into a realistic Bildungsroman. Therefore it will avoid repetitiousness and strained reconciliations of what are, after all, three separate novels if I chiefly consider Leaven, which best presents Davies as a writer of satirical romance, and see the other two in relation to it.

Unlike Hiebert and Birney, Davies seems to know very clearly what his targets are, and he is consistent in his approach to them. His Salterton -- which a reviewer has noted "bears no noticeable dissimilarity to Kingston"[76] -- is a sort of Mariposa seen fifty years hence, with the transition from rural life well behind it, and with enough hardware (a cathedral, university, and military college) to give solidity to its sense of self-importance, though it is

still basically a small town flaunting parvenu airs.

Davies' target is in a general sense the narrowness of the people of Salterton, a narrowness of mind and spirit that reveals itself in the pettiness, provincialism and puritanism that prevails. These themes are outlined in Tempest-tost by the Marchbanksian technique of undercutting decrepit romanticism with realism. Here it centres around an alfresco performance of Shakespeare's The Tempest, as undertaken by the local Little Theatre group. This dramatic situation provides latitude for caricature and amusing situation, which are achieved most subtly by the juxtaposition of the local cast members with the Shakespearean characters they are to play.

Intellectual Prospero is rendered by Professor Vambrace, a pedant from Waverley University; his daughter, the beautiful Miranda, is cast as Pearl Vambrace, the professor's repressed and loveless daughter; the character of the wise councillor Gonzalo is undertaken by an emotionally retarded school-teacher, Hector Mackilwraith; chivalrous Prince Ferdinand is portrayed by Roger Tassett, a self-important, lustful cadet from the military college; Caliban is played by one Shortreed, an irresponsible employee of the liquor commission; Ariel, the spirit of intellect, imagination and beauty, is played by Griselda Webster, the local femme fatale and daughter of the wealthiest man in town. "Thus," says Hugo McPherson, "the community's unacknowledged

but slavish worship of wealth as the 'highest good' is revealed in the casting of Ariel."[77]

These people, inadequate dramatically and personally as they are, are effectually Salterton's cultural elite. The contrast between their stage roles and their life roles is not over-emphasized, as it might have been, but very subtly counterpoints the book's satiric themes. Another counterpoint is to be found in the revelation that a ticket to the military college's ball can command fifty dollars to a scalper, while The Tempest attracts less than a capacity house.

Mrs. Forrester, the matron in charge of the Little Theatre, is a good example of how the ritualistic social gestures of Salterton society disguise rampant self-interest on the part of all; Mrs. Forrester "always maintained that you could say literally anything to anybody, just as long as you said it with a smile, to show that there were no hard feelings." (TT, 22) When this ploy fails, she is wont to display "a pout which had been rather attractive fifteen years earlier." (TT, 25-6) Her husband is a highly successful insurance salesman whose greatest asset is "his ability to share with perfect sincerity in several opposed points of view." (TT, 26) From the Forresters it is seen that what are considered the social graces are ossified and disingenuous formalities which conceal rather than reveal people to one another. Social conventions, thus viewed, are

a form of romanticism, a quid pro quo where the participants implicitly agree -- "I won't expose you, if you don't expose me." Those who best play this social game are at the top of Salterton society, whose ethos is represented by a minor character who "laughed a good deal at nothing in particular, and had a splendid grip of whatever was obvious and indisputable." (TT, 219)

The home of the Forresters is pure kitsch: uncomfortable, tasteless, and colourless, it is enlivened only by "two Notes of Colour"; "All else in the room was cleverly arranged to be of no colour at all." (TT, 27) The colourless, stuffy living room has an atmosphere of "delicate nausea." (TT, 27) The Forresters and their home reflect the dowdiness of which Davies (and Marchbanks) frequently complain. In addition, their housekeeping is "streamlined" by having all their food sent in.

An appreciation of good food, like an appreciation of good music, and good conversation -- and good interior decoration -- is a touchstone that Davies uses to indicate character. Appreciation or lack of appreciation for one usually indicates the same for all. The dinner party given by Mrs. Leakey, the wife of a minor cast member, is another example of dreadful taste, but in her case it comes not from "streamlining" but from trying too hard. She bakes all day for what is supposed to be a snack after rehearsal, and produces a huge quantity of "polite food": fancy sandwiches of

unprepossessing complexity, cakes smothered "with a deep layer of sticky stuff resembling marshmallow," (TT, 163) hors d'oeuvres of an unappetizing daintiness, and ice cream coloured green.

Through such delineations of minor characters Davies seeks to demonstrate that pretentiously awful taste is typical. In the foreground, through larger characters, he demonstrates the effects of such social and cultural norms on those who grow up in Salterton. In Tempest-tost the ill effects are shown most clearly in the character of Hector Mackilwraith.

For Hector Mackilwraith his chosen profession as a school-teacher is not just an identity, but the only redemption in a singularly colourless "life of quiet desperation." Hector is raised in a home dominated by his father's profession as a minister, (although his father has no real faith), and by his mother's dessicated belief in "proper behaviour" ("a gentleman, his mother had often said, was a man who used a butter knife even when alone" (TT, 39)).

After the death of Hector's father, "a gloomy and depressing parson," (TT, 74) Hector has to provide for his mother, a clinging, colourless woman who "encouraged and even compelled" (TT, 77) him to overeat, and who pushes him toward the ministry as well. Hector refuses to let himself be forced into an unappealing profession, but he bears the mark of his upbringing: "planning and common sense became

his gods" (TT, 87) and he applies them not only to his specialty, mathematics, but to every aspect of his life. The length to which he pursues planning and common sense is revealed when as a lovesick secret suitor for Griselda Webster, a girl less than half his age, he writes out a "plan of conduct" to win her, divided into Pro and Contra columns; one of the notations in the Contra column is "take off 25 lb., cut pie?" (TT, 134)

His absurd infatuation for Griselda precipitates him into a farcical and hardly credible suicide attempt which provides the novel's climax. Hector is a character of true Leacockian pathos; indeed he is not so much an object of satire as a pathetic character whose real misery gives weight to a story that, for all its wit, is often uneasily reminiscent of the Victorian drawing-room in the frothiness of its dialogue. Hector is, I think, to be taken as evidence that Davies' criticisms of Salterton (and Canadian) narrowness are not merely a snobbish and patronizing contempt of superficial solecisms by a more cosmopolitan arbiter of taste, but are a recognition of the profound effect such narrowness has on the quality of life.

Davies' involvement in theatre is apparent in this novel in other ways besides the subject matter. The plot has a certain "staginess" about it -- we almost seem to hear the creaking and grinding of ropes and gears as sets are shifted for scene changes. The dialogue reveals a good ear

for speech, but it is written as if to be declaimed to the back row of a theatre, rather than in the more intimate, informal style one associates with the novel. Above all, Davies makes a theatrical use of foils. In one sense, the element of satirical allegory in the casting of people of Salterton for Shakespeare's characters is a kind of use of foils, but the main sense with which I am concerned is more obvious. For instance, Hector Mackilwraith represents one end of a polarity, and Humphry Cobbler the other. Hector is unhappily single, introverted, and a dullard; Humphry, the organist at the local church who is in charge of music for the play, is happily married with children, extroverted, self-confident, and generally a blithe spirit, if in Salterton terms an eccentric one. Cobbler is described as "a man so alive, and so apparently happy, that the air for two or three feet around him seemed charged with his delight in life." (TT, 169) He is rather Marchbanksian in his appreciation of the folly of others, but more importantly he represents the forces of Eros in society, as opposed to the forces of Thanatos which seem to be in power. This Freudian statement of Davies' central opposition of forces in his fifth columnist's battle for the liberation of the Canadian psyche is not my own, though Davies does not make it explicit until the third novel (MF, 108); however, it clearly applies throughout the series.

At the conclusion of Tempest-tost the forces of Eros

seem to be in the ascendant. The play is a qualified success. Hector's half-hearted attempt at Thanatos is a failure, and he decides to move away to what may be a lingering demise at a desk job in the Department of Education. Mrs. Caesar Augustus Conquergood, the elderly social lion whom Mrs. Forrester was hoping to impress with the play (for which she was made an honorary patron) leaves before the end. Despite assistant director Solly Bridgetower's cynical comment about the Canadian god, anxiety, ("We all believe that if we fret and abuse ourselves sufficiently, Providence will take pity and smile upon anything we attempt" (TT, 250)), the forces of culture seem to have made an inroad.

In Leaven of Malice it is Romeo and Juliet that provides the Shakespearean counterpoint, though here the echo is much fainter. Two characters from Tempest-tost, Solly Bridgetower and Pearl Vambrace, are linked in a false engagement notice maliciously inserted into the local newspaper, the Salterton Ballman. The repercussions of this act -- which ironically is intended as revenge against a girl mistaken for Pearl -- spread through the community, giving Davies the opportunity to make satirical observations and situations from his perceptions of Canadian narrowness and lack of initiative.

His themes are more expansively and pointedly presented here than previously, with the pernicious effects of the older generation upon the younger well displayed in the

central agon of the Vambraces and the Bridgetowers. In this the sins of the parents are plainly and violently visited upon the children, for the conflict stems from a time when Solly and Pearl were babies, when Solly's father, the late Dean Solomon Bridgetower, blocked Professor Vambrace's bid for election as Dean of Arts at Waverley University. It is soon demonstrated that hell hath no fury like an academic scorned, for Vambrace, a pompous, self-righteous scholar who has retained his enmity for the Bridgetowers, takes the false notice as a personal insult; when the newspaper refuses to print his over-blown idea of an apology, he undertakes a lawsuit.

As proud as he is splenetic, Professor Vambrace represents a "bad humour" in society: like many another satirical figure, he is in some ways a monomaniac with an absurdly touchy sense of self-importance; he cares nothing for the effect that his proposed lawsuit would have on his unlucky and unloved daughter. When they have a severe falling-out over the matter, Vambrace does not admit his fault and attempt a reconciliation with her, because of his reactionary belief that "A child was, through the very fact of being a child, always in the wrong in any dispute." (LM, 206) A ridiculous figure when angry, one whose anger seems disproportionate to his grievance, Vambrace's main objection to the false notice seems to be that his daughter and young Bridgetower are "coupled in the public mouth,"

(LM, 146) an indiscretion easier to say than imagine. Absurd as this complaint sounds, we are told that it enrages him to the point where "at one time foam, unmistakable foam, had appeared at the corners of his mouth." (LM, 102)

The Davies touchstone used to satirically mirror the Vambraces' lack of vitality and spirit is food. Their meals are mentioned with a sort of horror: in Tempest-tost, we learn of them dining on "a rather nasty potato salad and some sour canned cherries" (TT, 215); here we find them making a meal of "left-over blancmange and jelly-roll." (LM, 205) The reason given for their poor fare exhibits the meanness of their lives:

> In twenty-five years of marriage Professor Vambrace and his wife had never reached any satisfactory arrangement about food; she was pre-occupied, and thought food a fleshly indulgence; he liked food, but disliked paying for it. In consequence they lived mainly on scraps and bits. (LM, 108)

It is not because they cannot afford to live well that the Vambraces do not; it is because they are too narrow, too mean to do so.

Of course there are other examples of reactionary, anti-youth and anti-vital people, for the worst of the older people seem to have most of the influence. Such a person is the crotchety old spinster, "Puss" Pottinger, who often refers to herself romantically as "a soldier's daughter," though her father was a colonel of militia who never got near a battle. Vambrace's lawyer, the stagily Dickensian

Martin Snelgrove, is "the prisoner of a professional manner" (LM, 73); like Vambrace, his manner and his sensibility are both archaic. We are not surprised when Snelgrove shows bad faith in his legal work and as a deacon of his church, for he dislikes music, and also that Eros figure, his church's organist, the irrepressible Humphry Cobbler. Like many a professional man of Salterton, Snelgrove doesn't appreciate the "finer things," and his lack of sensitivity is seen in everything he does.

However, the effects of a complacently narrow generation (or series of generations) are most severely felt in the relationship of parents to their children, which develops the theme from Tempest-tost. In that book the only satisfactory parent-child relationship seems to be that of the Websters, which is well in the background, and which moreover is strictly the result of a laissez-faire policy of child-rearing. Tom Webster is a widower who does not know how to handle his precocious young daughters by himself, because "he came of a generation to which any girl, before she is married, is a kind of unexploded bomb." (TT, 66)

But as seen from Davies' Olympian perspective, laissez-faire is far better than the over-protective, shamelessly clinging tactics of a Mrs. Bridgetower. Solly Bridgetower is even more guilt-ridden through maternal claustrophobia than Pearl Vambrace is because of her domineering father. "You are my only real interest now, dear" (LM, 161) his mother

tells him. Solly, who has studied abroad at Cambridge, is twenty-five and an assistant professor of English at Waverley University, but lives with his mother, who always waits up for him at night, so that he cannot enjoy himself without guilt. His mother is a weak and unbalanced woman, a hypochrondriac who heavily drugs herself for relief of imagined symptoms. While all children in Salterton seem to be treated as possessions, no parent is as possessive as Mrs. Bridgetower: she finds it "frightening and intolerable" (LM, 167) that she does not completely understand his motives, especially his chivalry towards Pearl, whom she denigrates in fear of losing her son. The irony of it is that there was not even friendship between Solly and Pearl before the escalating rivalry of their parents forced them together. The true announcement of the engagement of Solly and Pearl (who in a gesture of symbolic rebirth adopts her second name, Veronica) symmetrically completes the book and breaks their parental bonds.

Solly has another conflict to resolve. As a junior lecturer at the university, he feels pressures to publish in scholarly journals, and at the same time is drawn toward creative writing. The conflict between his individual creative impulse and the pressures of his position -- both in teaching and publishing -- is variously presented. He is told by his department head to "jump right into Amcan." (LM, 172) By this Solly takes to mean "the scholarly

disembowelling of whatever seemed durable in American-Canadian literature." (LM, 172) He is given the works of the nineteenth century Canadian writer Charles Heavysege, who proves a "heavy siege" indeed when Solly starts wading through his writings. His work with Heavysege represents, in microcosm, a sense of insecurity regarding the Canadian literary heritage, to which more effort seems to be expended in its exhumation than in its expansion. Solly once asks of the Cobblers: "Do you realize what Heavysege is? He is my path to fame, my immortality and the tomb of my youth. I wish I'd never heard of him." (LM, 187) His work on Heavysege and his sense of failure as a teacher even lead him to question the value of an indigenous literature:

> Why do countries have to have literatures? Why does a country like Canada, so late upon the international scene, feel that it must rapidly acquire the trappings of older countries -- music of its own, books of its own -- and why does it fuss and stew, and storm the heavens with its outcries when it does not have them? Solly pondered bitterly upon these problems, knowing full well how firmly he was caught in the strong, close mesh of his country's cultural ambitions. (LM, 173)

Solly seems to have acquired the disease (so prevalent in Salterton) of blaming his misfortunes on others: it is his own divergent ambitions, to be an artist and to succeed as an academic, that are the cause of this conflict.

Canada's cultural backwardness in the contemporary sense is represented by the novel-in-progress of Henry Rumball, a reporter for the Ballman. Its title, The Plain that Broke the Plough, is an inversion of Pare Lorentz'

classic American documentary film, The Plow that Broke the Plains (1936), that wittily summarizes the theme in Canadian literature wherein man is overwhelmed by the forces of nature. It anticipates by some fifteen years Margaret Atwood's similar statement, "if a Canadian did a Moby Dick, it would be done from the point of view of the whale."[78] Rumball's statement of his plot sounds like nothing so much as the sort of novel that Sarah Binks would write:

> "I open with a tremendous description of the Prairie; vast, elemental, brooding, slumbrous; I reckon on at least fifteen thousand words of that. Then Man comes. Not the Red Man; he understands the prairie; he croons to it. No, this is the White Man; he doesn't understand the prairie; he rips up its belly with a blade; he ravishes it. 'Take it easy,' says the Red Man. 'Aw, drop dead,' says the White Man. You see? There's your conflict. But the real conflict is between the White Man and the prairie. The struggle goes on for three generations, and at last the prairie breaks the White Man. Just throws him off." (LM, 21)

This is silly stuff, but Solly is humbled by the fact that it is attempted:

> Here, at least, was a man who was trying to create something, to spin something out of his own guts and his own experience. He was not a scholarly werewolf, digging up the corpse of poor Charles Heavysege, hoping to make a few meals on the putrefying flesh of the dead poet. (LM, 174)

Davies is undoubtedly overstating Canada's cultural situation for effect, but it is hard to be convinced of the seriousness of his subject when it is presented by such flimsy caricatures as Solly and Henry Rumball. Eventually, through the encouragement of Molly and Humphry Cobbler, Solly throws Heavysege aside in favor of a personal commitment to the

creation of literature; he tells his faculty chairman that he wants "to be a creator of Amcan, not one of its embalmers." (LM, 272)

Davies has some satirical sport with scholarly embalmers, but he really extends himself at the expense of those pop psychologists, Norm and Dutchy Yarrow, at whose party Solly and Pearl first meet after the printing of the false notice. For Norm and Dutchy, psychology is the key to the secrets of the universe, and they have an unquestioning faith in the efficacy of its tenets and procedures. The repeated emphasis of their "normality" only accentuates their banality; for them, "normality" is an obsession that recalls Hector Mackilwraith's gods of "planning and common sense." Norm's name, of course, is a diminutive of "normal."

Their faculty party satirically displays their aggressive normality. Dutchy, braced with gin, and comforted by the thought that "they were not the kind of people who were brought to ruin by drink," (LM, 121) runs things along the lines of a children's camp counsellor. Their debacle of forced fun reaches its climax when, in one of their "ice-breaking" parlour games, Pearl and Solly are bound and gagged together and have to free themselves unaided. Their mutual embarrassment and resentment are somewhat lessened by this experience, because they are unable to explain that their engagement is fictitious. Norm's toast to the "bride" on this occasion is a marvel of self-congratulatory

sincerity devoid of sympathy or sensitivity:

> "Friends," said he, making his voice full and thrilling, "let's drink to Pearlie and Solly. Dutchy and I can't claim to be old friends of either of them, but we know what married happiness is, and I think that gives us a kind of claim to speak now. . . . I guess you all know that Pearlie is one hell of a swell kid, but life hasn't been much fun for her. A shy kid, brainy, not the aggressive type, she's had the idea that she's a failure in life -- that she isn't attractive. A religious problem, too, which I won't touch on now, but I guess all of us who have a sincere but modern and scientific Faith know that it's pretty lonely if you haven't got that and are wandering around in the dark, so to speak." (LM, 135-6)

The aggressively insensitive helpfulness of Norm meets its match in his interview with Pearl's father. Their meeting is prompted by the rumour that Vambrace has beaten his daughter with a walking-stick; Norm sees it as a straightforward manifestation of an Oedipus complex. He reasons, "if he hit her over the shoulders it might have been just rage, but if he hit her over the fanny it was definitely sex." (LM, 179) In the confrontation over this theory, the professor of classics completely routs the wooly-headed psychologist. While not a character for whom the reader is likely to have much sympathy, Professor Vambrace is at least conceded a knowledge of his subject. Norm is as insensitive personally as the professor, but he is ignorant as well. When he finds that Vambrace knows the Oedipus legend in detail, whereas he uses it as a catchall phrase, Norm revises his accusation to "a kind of mental incest, maybe." (LM, 209) Vambrace furiously retorts, "Do you imply that

the sins of the mind are trivial and the sins of the flesh important?" (LM, 209) before calling him "an undereducated, brassy young pup, who thinks that gall can take the place of the authority of wisdom, and that a professional lingo can disguise . . . lack of thought." (LM, 210)

Although driven ingloriously from Vambrace's office, Norm is able to reconcile his self-concept with his defeat, his insensitivity unimpaired: "The more Norm reflected on the interview, the more he was convinced that he had understood it all thoroughly. Which, as he was the expert on human behaviour, was perfectly normal." (LM, 211)

The reader is given another kind of norm through the sections dealing with the Bellman. The letters to the editor, Gloster Ridley, are not a complimentary reflection of the Bellman's readership, for they seem to range from senile puffery to puerile complaint with little in between. One,

> deeply critical of The Bellman, was so eccentric in grammar and spelling that it took five minutes of Ridley's time to prepare it for the printer; there is nothing that makes an editor feel more like St. Francis -- a loving brother to the ass -- than this sort of remedial work on a letter which accuses him of unfairness or stupidity. (LM, 26)

Ridley is neither unfair nor stupid, but he is content with his own level of mediocrity:

> He certainly had a sense of uneasiness, though it was nothing to what it had been a few years ago. To sit in an editor's chair, even reading epidemic jokes and groping for witty apercus, was a good life; better, certainly, than his days as a reporter and, later, as a news editor. (LM, 16)

Yet he is almost unique in Salterton for being able to see

his occupation without romanticism:

> To be an editor was to be a geyser of opinion; every day, without fail, Old Faithful must shoot up his jet of comment, neither so provocative as to drive subscribers from his paper, nor yet so inane as to be utterly contemptible. The editor must not affront the intelligence of the better sort among his readers, and yet he must try to say something acceptable to those who really took the paper for the comics and the daily astrology feature. Truly, a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks. (LM, 17)

While groping for witty apercus, he relieves his tedium in a Marchbanksian fashion: "If a new Sweater Girl every month, why not an Udders Day, for the suitable honouring of all mammals." (LM, 17)

A kindly man, Ridley is initially too weak to forcibly retire the ancient Swithin Shillitoe, a journalist whose irrelevance in print is well defined by an aphorism of Karl Kraus: "The making of a journalist: no ideas, and the ability to express them."[79] Ridley's chief function in the novel is to act as a focus for the mediocrity of the people (staff and readers) around him; he is not a satirical figure because he appreciates his own inadequacies, and because he brings some spirit to his defence of journalists:

> "We still live by our wits. We haven't bullied and public-relations-agented the public to the point where they think that we are gods walking the earth, and beyond all criticism. We are among the last people who are not completely, utterly and damnably respectable. There is a little of the Old Adam even in the dullest of us, and it keeps us young." (LM, 140)

In the general redemption of the principals that concludes the book, Ridley is able to admit his guilty secret -- his wife is kept in an asylum -- as he abandons his dream of an

honorary degree from Waverley University.

Ridley is slightly involved in a sub-plot that repeats two of the main themes. Mrs. Edith Little, his housekeeper, is an abandoned mother who forces all her affection upon her enfant son, Earl. Earl, like other children of Salterton, is burdened with the redemption of his parent's unhappy life. His mother addresses him as "lover," and concocts anecdotes to demonstrate his brilliance and charm in an effort to endear him to Ridley, whom she hopes to marry. Ridley, however, takes an unromantically Marchbanksian view of children in general, and Earl in particular:

> Was it ever permissible, he wondered, to describe a child as a slob? Surely slob was the only accurate word for little Earl. Though the child was not much more than three, he already had a hulking, stooped walk, his round abdomen suggested the prolapsed belly of middle age, and in the corner of his mouth was a damp hole, as though provided by nature for the soggy butt of a cigar. (LM, 198)

The other sub-plot concerns Bevill Higgin, Mrs. Little's boarder, who is crucially involved in the main plot because he inserted the false engagement notice. More importantly to a consideration of the satiric element in the novel, he represents ersatz immigrant culture from "the Old World" and it is more insidiously bad than the fumbling native attempts at culture represented by The Plain that Broke the Plough. Higgin is a joyless soi-disant professor of elocution and voice who offers to teach young Earl "an accent which would at once make him persona grata among persons of cultivation." (LM, 89) He expresses the hope

that "in a young country, so avid for culture as Canada . . . it will not take me too long to make my way." (LM, 156) But his bogus idea of culture requires a climate of embarrassed ignorance for acceptance, and in choosing the upwardly mobile Canadian community of Salterton, Higgin shows the instinct of a true parasite. His idea of singing is in the worst Victorian taste, maudlin ballads embellished with rubato and vocal gimmickry; as Davies reports, "It was plain that he had had a lot of training, for nobody ever sang so by the light of Nature." (LM, 159)

Higgin sows his seed of malice because Gloster Ridley will not buy a series of articles from him on vocal training, and also because Tessie Forgie (whom he mistook for Pearl Vambrace) ignored him when he visited the library where they both work. Higgin's oily sort of charm is a success with the local gossip-mongering ladies, who are the perfect seedbed for the seeds of malice concerning Ridley that he plants into conversation. Higgin represents what is disreputable, both morally and artistically, about Canada's imported culture. His near-seduction of Mrs. Little is the occasion when he is revealed as the one who inserted the notice.

While Higgin's malice exposes the narrowness of many Saltertonians, it also transforms the community. Like the yeast in bread, it expands what it works upon -- in this case, the sensibilities of those involved -- so that the classically symmetrical ending symbolizes a triumph for Eros

and a belief in the future.

In the final book of the trilogy, A Mixture of Frailties, the Eros spirit is again victorious, but the victory is ambiguous, and it is found that the traditional, repressive forces in the community are not so easily exorcized. Mrs. Bridgetower, the eccentric, wealthy widow, is dead on the opening page, but her malignant spirit is a dominant presence throughout. The conditions of her will impose an intolerable condition upon Veronica (nee Pearl) and Solly: they must produce a son or they get nothing except the use of her house, which costs them more than they can afford in upkeep, and a paltry hundred dollars. Possessive of her son in life, Mrs. Bridgetower is possessive of her grandson yet unborn in death, for should a male heir appear, he must be christened with the names she wants in order to satisfy a condition of the will.

Until the trust is broken by the birth of a son to Veronica and Solly, the will provides for a scholarship for the education abroad of a young woman of artistic promise. The novel largely concerns itself with the recipient of the Trust's scholarship, Monica Gall, as she is educated, in various ways, in London, Paris, Wales, and Vienna. It cannot be considered a satirical romance like its two predecessors, and were it not part of the trilogy it would not merit a comment here. It is, in retrospect, a transitional work that leads Davies from his satirical romances to the more

complex, probing fiction of Fifth Business and The Manticore. Since Salterton plays a minor part in the story, and since Monica's story is something of a Bildungsroman, the satirical element is but a faint echo of Leaven of Malice. Davies attempts a casually realistic tone, but he does not bring Monica to life, and the novel takes itself too seriously. The reader is hectored to excessive length by the lectures Monica receives from Sir Benedict Domdaniel, the conductor who is responsible for her training. Lorne and Meg McCorkill, the Canadians Monica meets in London, are a poor caricature of the xenophobic expatriate. Davies' attempt at realism is not successful, especially as regards Monica, but it abolishes any comic possibility.

Monica speaks as people do only when they are being interviewed, or are on trial. Her character is wondrously inconsistent: a young, repressed girl, discovered singing in the radio choir of her religious sect, she is dominated by gloomy, puritan parents -- yet her deflowering is perfunctory in the extreme. The young composer with whom she is studying, Giles Revelstoke, turns up at the house where she is spending Christmas in Wales, and they meet in the bathroom, with the following result:

> And then, because Monica looked so attractive with her hair brushed out, and her mouth foaming slightly with pink dentifrice, and because the lamplight in the bathroom was so charming, and because the couch was so conveniently at hand, and probably also because it was Christmas -- because of so many elements so subtly combined, Monica returned to her

> bedroom in just under a quarter of an hour, much astonished and even more delighted. (MF, 179)

In much the same manner, her voice teacher, Murtagh Molloy, forces himself upon her at a costume ball, and this is her reaction: "So this is rape, thought Monica, strangely cool, as she was dragged down upon the fusty carpet of the box." (MF, 259) Strangely cool indeed! This might be a parody of the romantic ingenue, or the adventures of a world-weary libertine from the publishing house of Maurice Girodias, but it is hardly credible as the behaviour of a sheltered daughter of Salterton, who was until recently the swain of a fellow employee at "the Glue Works."

Consolidated Adhesives and Abrasives, the formal name of "the Glue Works," is a good description of family relations in Salterton. The abrasiveness that has arisen between parents and children is a result of the adhesiveness with which parents try to possess their offspring. This is true of Monica's parents, and especially true of Solly Bridgetower's mother. Yet Mrs. Bridgetower's will, like the malice of Bevill Higgin, serves as a catalyst for good. Veronica and Solly have a stillborn son, and Solly suffers from impotence after it, but they finally get the inheritance, and are perhaps more united because of the experience. Monica has been transformed into an accomplished singer and, less believably, into a mature woman who will accept a marriage proposal from Domdaniel, the renowned, elderly conductor who has been her mentor. Some of the Trust's money has been used by Monica

to help finance an opera by Revelstoke entitled The Golden Asse (the title is a fitting epitaph for its patron, Mrs. Bridgetower). As Domdaniel says of Revelstoke, who commits suicide for reasons hardly more convincing than Hector Mackilwraith's, "Extraordinary how people sometimes create so much better than they live." (MF, 360) The same could be said of Mrs. Bridgetower and her Trust, and the sentiment might explain the author's guarded optimism for the future of Salterton.

Although it is the least satisfactory novel of the trilogy, A Mixture of Frailties does conclude the series on an interestingly Pyrrhic -- should we read Canadian? -- note. After all the expense and trouble that went into producing Monica's astonishing artistic and social development, it is indicated that she too will become an expatriate -- because Canada is now too small for her artistic stature. This ironic fact, so casually intimated in closing, is far more satiric than anything else about A Mixture of Frailties.

Of these three novels Hugo McPherson has remarked that they "study in symbolic fashion a problem that has concerned Canadian writers since Susanna Moodie: the plight of the imagination in this chilly cultural climate."[80] Davies uses the form of the satirical romance to ridicule the chilly apostles of imaginative permafrost -- like the Little Theatre organizer, Mrs. Forrester, who says that "There's a kind of nice simplicity about a Canadian that education abroad seems

to destroy." (TT, 30-1) But Davies uses that simplicity, that very lack of stimulation, as the source of his wit, for as George Meredith writes, "Dulness, insensible to the comic, has the privilege of arousing it; and the laying of a dull finger on matters of human life is the surest method of establishing electrical communications with a battery of laughter. . . ."[81]

Davies' perspective is anti-romantic, his method the application of realism to the romantic illusions by which men live. He also introduces contrasting Eros figures like Humphry Cobbler to serve as foils and good examples. It is true that Davies uses characters to reveal attitudes rather than the reverse, but that approach is appropriate for his purposes. His novels are essentially dramatic, in the sense of theatrical, and his characters are too articulate to be realistic. Ivon Owen has pointed out that "This fluent volubility, this compulsion to put everything into words, is shared by nearly all Mr. Davies's characters, and it comes directly from the stage."[82]

"God, what a lot we hear about unhappy marriages, and how little we hear about unhappy sons and daughters," (LM, 226) complains Solly Bridgetower; it is a situation that Davies seems determined to correct singlehandedly, for while his husbands and wives are contented (if for what we might consider the wrong reasons), no parent-child relationship in his trilogy seems really satisfactory. Davies seems to

believe, with one of his characters, that "The old ones just want to eat the young ones up." (MF, 201) The problem of imagination is a parallel one: the tastes and attitudes of the past continue to survive in decay, and must be thrust aside by the vitality of the present and coming generations. It is not an easy battle, but Davies, despite the ambiguous conclusion of Monica Gall's story, seems to think it can be won.

Conclusion

In the Conclusion to the first chapter of this study, I stated that for that proselytizing group of satirists, "man is viewed in terms of his potential." This potential was seen as the communal, social potential of the mass of men working in harmony toward common goals. In the second phase of Canadian satire, man is viewed in terms of his self-deception, and his tendency toward a mass consciousness is seen as a ridiculous conformity rather than an exciting opportunity.

By the introduction of realism into romanticism, the irony of the strong individualist has detached itself from the romantic self-preoccupations of the masses. Man is no longer considered the apex of creation and the centre of the world, but a foolish creature who has allowed himself to become dwarfed and enslaved by his own creation, the modern industrial state. Nor does he seem capable of retrieving

himself from his predicament. The emphasis on correct procedures leading confidently to success that forms the core of the first phase group is nowhere to be found in the debunking operations of Leacock, Davies, Birney or Hiebert.

Their satire seems intended, in part, as a balance for social good, their anti-romanticism a counterweight to the deceptive romantic haze in which society is seen to be foundering. Yet they do so with no assurance of having found solutions to common problems such as uncritical conformity and hypocrisy. The satire has no direct reference to anything approaching a philosophical or cosmic conspectus beyond the implicit stance of the anti-romantic satirist, that of the rugged individualist who represents no one but himself.

In the first chapter, the writers used the characters of rugged individualists, Mephibosheth Stepsure, Sam Slick, and Adam More, to put forth social solutions, however evanescent they may now appear to us. In the second phase, it is the authors who have become the rugged individualists; speaking for himself, the writer has become his own persona. This is clear enough in the writings I have considered by Leacock, Birney, and Hiebert, and in Davies' <u>alter ego</u> Samuel Marchbanks, but it can also be found in the stage-managed symmetry and curmudgeonly harangues of the Salterton novels. Even there the narrative voice gives way to the personal authorial voice, although since Davies is working

in the novel, the writer's personality is not as prominent as it is with Leacock. This personal voice, however, is confident only within its negatively critical limits. It seeks not to persuade, but to expose folly and hypocrisy, although the author's motives are not always clear -- as was the case in Turvey and Sarah Binks.

But if the general motive behind this satire is little more than a desire to afflict the comfortable, there is also the feeling that the follies of "modern" man are comical, entertaining, and worthy of being written about for that reason alone. For as Swift wrote, "I demand, whether I have not as good a title to laugh as men have to be ridiculous; and to expose vice, as men have to be vicious."[83]

This sensibility in Canadian letters stems particularly from Leacock, and there is little wonder that Hiebert, Birney and Davies have all won the Leacock Medal for Humour -- for Sarah Binks in 1948, Turvey in 1950, and Leaven of Malice in 1954. One can see how they have been regarded as humour, for the satire is sometimes sketchy in conception and certainly never mordant. There has been no one to write another Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich, perhaps because Leacock's successors were too bifocal to savage the present, since they were simultaneously romanticizing the past. Perhaps it was because, as Leacock wrote, "The price paid for knowledge is the loss of the eye of innocence"[84] and they wouldn't pay the price. Not just Arcadian

Adventures, but world wars and the Depression have had surprisingly little influence on Canadian satire before Richler, for even Birney's "military picaresque" was half-hearted in its retrospective romanticism.

The anti-romantic satirist is amusing but genial, not confident enough to ridicule fiercely, but not so conscious of absurdity to despair feelingly. Using wit and realism, their function, to paraphrase Chamfort, has been to indicate how very few people realize how much wit is needed not to be ridiculous.

CHAPTER III

THE ABSURDISTS

Mordecai Richler (1931-)

At first glance, it may not seem to be much of a step from the satire of Robertson Davies to the satire of Mordecai Richler. Both are native Canadians, and while they are not of the same generation, they published their first novels within three years of each other -- Richler's The Acrobats (1954) following Davies' Tempest-tost (1951). However, between their approaches to satire there is a great difference in both form and content.

Davies, writing in Canada, has, in his Salterton novels, reflected the British tradition, not just insofar as it lingers on in Salterton/Kingston, but through his judicial distance, his cool wit, and his sense of balance and propriety. By contrast, Richler, having written much of his satire in England, has paradoxically done so within the modern American mainstream: "To be a Canadian, for Richler, has always meant to write within the North American rather than the British tradition."[1] Richler's imagination is violent, often grotesque, and he generally emphasizes subjective involvement more than Davies or any of the other writers previously considered. One critic, writing in the Satire Newsletter, has agreed with this kind of distinction: "I am tempted to say that the major difference between

neo-classical and contemporary satire is this appeal to what must be called subjective norms."[2]

One of the most interesting aspects of this study for me is this relatively recent movement toward sympathy in satire; judgment may be harsh, but also ambiguous. This change in approach may be found even in the works of Davies alone, a movement from objective omniscience to subjective ambiguity. In terms of the evolution of satiric modes, this has meant that the historical shift from the moral grounds of conduct to the psychology of consciousness has brought about a corresponding shift in the way stories are told. This change is well illustrated by an investigation of the accomplished satire of Mordecai Richler.

Unlike Davies, whose fiction has moved from neo-classical satire to psychological realism, Richler began, in The Acrobats, with psychological realism, (however recherche and derivative), and has since moved into fictions where satire is a dominant spirit -- sometimes its raison d'etre, as in Cocksure, sometimes united with psychological realism, as in St. Urbain's Horseman.

The first intimations of this broad scope of satirical impulse in Richler's fiction are found not in The Acrobats, but in his second novel, Son of a Smaller Hero (1955). This novel presents many themes that are more complexly stated in his later work -- the Montreal Jewish ghetto mentality, the conflict of generations between one

raised in the shtetls of Europe and the other in Canada, the related conflict of tradition versus assimilation, the sense of disillusionment in finding the larger world more sophisticated than the ghetto but equally corrupt.

In Son of a Smaller Hero Noah Adler, like Duddy Kravitz and Jake Hersh after him, rebels at the insular world of the ghetto where if you wish to be accepted in the community, your progress can only be vertical, essentially financial, as symbolized by moving from a flat on St. Urbain St. to a house in Outremont. Horizontal mobility, into other cultures, other religions, other milieus, is anathema. The community solidarity which held the Jews together through pogroms and the diaspora is eroded by the lack of persecution in Canada. Ethnic prejudice, rather than re-enforcing this sense of solidarity, works against it because, as Noah discovers, assimilation reduces discrimination -- so the pressure on the young is greater to belong than to protect. Richler writes, "The ghetto of Montreal has no real walls and no true dimensions. The walls are the habit of atavism and the dimensions are an illusion. But the ghetto exists all the same."[3]

This is the subject of Son of a Smaller Hero, but its treatment is generally sardonic rather than satiric. The seeming impossibility for rapprochement between the generations and the inevitably painful choices this fact necessitates is its sad and bitter theme, so that its

presentation is almost elegaic; the satiric perceptions are in the background, and only as a motive for Noah's rebellion.

For example, the speech of the crowd of bystanders that surrounds the collapsed and burnt-out office which has entombed Wolf Adler, Noah's father, records the dominance of their prejudices, much like the remarks of bystanders in Nathanael West's Day of the Locust. A local grocery is selling sandwiches to the morbidly fascinated throng, while a man tries to sell life insurance. Meanwhile, blame for Wolf's death and praise for his life are being apportioned, even before his body is uncovered. The great irony is the speed with which belief becomes faith; it is assumed that Wolf died trying to save scrolls of the Torah, when he was actually trying to rescue money that he believed was in his father's strongbox. The strongbox represents the fraud that traditionalists foist on the young, for while it contains sacred scrolls, amateurly executed by Melech, Noah's grandfather, it also contains Melech's love letters to a shiksa whose memory he has never outgrown. It is locked like a part of the psyche that is sealed to preserve the appearance of faith. Melech is the most orthodox of Jews, but the destructive hypocrisy of his notions of familial authority are symbolized by his locked strongbox.

Melech's son Wolf has his own repository of secret knowledge, and it is perhaps more pathetic than satiric. His diary, discovered by Noah, is an account of incredible

banality written in a schoolboy code. Wolf epitomizes ghetto harrowness and insularity, his fascination with life's minutiae being such that he records how many steps he takes in an average day, how much urine he passes on an average day (three pints), and after some calculations based on the average amount of time spent sleeping and defecating, concludes that "If I live until 90 I will have actually lived only (approx.) 57 years -- having wasted the rest of the time sleeping or in the toilet." (SSH, 246) The irony that results when the young reject the world so laboriously made for them is told by Noah's mother as he prepares to escape to Europe: "'When I think of how my father struggled to get us out of Europe. How all of us struggled. . . .'" (SSH, 274)

The conflict is not resolved in Son of a Smaller Hero, and we are given no reason to think that it ever can be without greater love and faith on both sides. Richler's next book, A Choice of Enemies (1957), concerns the result of one man's escape from the Montreal ghetto to Europe. (These two books set the pattern later more successfully explored in The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz and St. Urbain's Horseman.) Again there is a satiric sensibility in evidence, but it is secondary to the grim naturalism of the conflicts between characters.

For the expatriate in Europe the conflict between a rigidly ordered traditional belief and an existential attitude to experience may be largely avoided, but there are

still choices, a choice of enemies, or as Noah tells a shopkeeper in the previous book, "There is a choice of beliefs and a choice of truths to go with them. If you choose not to choose then there is no truth at all." (SSH, 115)

This belief is expanded in A Choice of Enemies as it focuses on the life and choices of Norman Price, a precursor of Jake Hersh who says that "The Canadian dream, if there ever was such a puff, was how do I get out?"[4] Norman, who "got out early," (ACE, 11) left at eighteen to study in England. The novel finds him, twenty years later, cut off from his homeland and himself. Here again one can, with the benefit of hindsight, detect the operation of a satiric sensibility, but again the novel succeeds in merely being sardonic, because Richler's irony fails to include his main characters.

We read of the Canadian emigre colony in London, of the hopeless gaiety of its bottle parties ("A red-stained slice of lemon adhering to the bottom of your glass all night" (ACE, 53)) and of the paranoic competitiveness and guilt of those who left Canada because it was too colonial and wound up in an even smaller colony in London. The novel is about the loss of ideals: the ideals of communism, success, creative fulfillment and love are exploded and left in ruins with only depressingly compromised choices left.

Despite Desmond Pacey's claims for its satiric quality,[5] I can find little satire in the shattered lives

and beliefs of the characters in this novel, although one can see the beginnings of the satire that later bloomed in Cocksure and St. Urbain's Horseman. Here there are ironies, but they are hardly pointed enough for satire, certainly not for significant satire.

What prevents these first three (or three "first") novels of Richler from the full satiric expression that his tenuous ironies imply he is capable of is that to this point his involvement with characters is too narrowly subjective. They seem to receive rather than perceive the ironies of their lives, and their sardonic bitterness is too narrow for satire. In these first novels Richler himself seems merely bitter about the choices that must be made in a world that has lost its sense of norms; in his later satirical work, he expresses sympathy with life lived in the absence of norms, and anger at those who resurrect or construct norms that confuse and exploit people. These twin aspects of his satire are best explicated, in an introductory way, by an excerpt from an article critic Ellen Leyburn wrote in the Satire Newsletter:

> It seems to me that the difficulty for the critic . . . comes from the fact that the disturbed sensibility of our time is producing a superficially satiric mode of writing which is fundamentally different in purpose from most of what has been embraced by even so catholic a term as "satire." We are confronted with a body of works which seem to be cast in the tone and manner of satire and yet not to have at all as object the judgment which satire has hitherto implied. Not only the works of Nathanael West, but most of the Theatre of the Absurd and much current poetry and fiction reveal under the surface mockery a spirit of

> compassion or frustration which is the very opposite of what we have thought of as satiric condemnation or ridicule. The glory and delight of satiric comedy has always been its complexity, its power to sustain a double vision which compels the reader to use his own wits and arrive at a judgment. But the complexity by which we are now baffled is of a different order. The laughter is often wild and hilarious; but it is used to wring the heart with pity for miserable mankind rather than to stimulate judgment of fools or knaves. The effect is bound to be disconcerting to the critic trying to measure such work by the familiar canons of satire. We feel somehow violently tricked when we go off into gales of laughter and then find ourselves dropped into gulfs of pity or the abyss of despair.[6]

If, as Walpole once claimed, "This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel," in contemporary fiction it often seems absurd to those who try to do both. Richler's four novels that have been oriented around satire are, for my purposes, best divided into two groups: The Incomparable Atuk (1963) and Cocksure (1968) express frustration, while The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (1959) and St. Urbain's Horseman (1972) are evocative of compassion. The former group will be discussed first.

In expressing frustration through satire, Richler can be petulant, as he is in The Incomparable Atuk, or sophisticated, as in Cocksure. Both are informed by biting anger and a grotesque imagination, and both are in some sense a reaction against the gullibility of the public for the cheapness of the illusions it accepts, and also against the culpability of the illusionists, and the cynical squalor of their Big Lies. These books both explore through satire what Marshal McLuhan has called "the folklore of industrial man."[7]

In The Incomparable Atuk the satire is directed at these things, and a few peripheral targets as well, but its chief target is the passivity of the many-headed, the mass of common men. As McLuhan also wrote in The Mechanical Bride,

> A huge passivity has settled on industrial society. For people carried about in mechanical vehicles, earning their living by waiting on machines, listening much of the waking day to canned music, watching packaged movie entertainment and capsulated news, for such people it would require an exceptional degree of awareness and an especial heroism of effort to be anything but supine consumers of processed goods.[8]

Into the world of processed goods (including processed ideas and processed culture) comes Atuk, an Eskimo poet. With the right help Atuk is soon a skillful media manipulator; his image, that of the innocent savage artist, is unusually marketable, and Atuk maintains it as he moves into more commercial enterprises than poetry. In doing so he exposes the dupes of the media -- of which he becomes a master -- as the real innocents.

As George Woodcock has pointed out, the pattern so roughly followed here is an inversion of Voltaire's L'Ingenu, where a child of the wilderness is bewildered by the corruption he finds in eighteenth-century Paris.[9] In the corrupt world of twentieth-century Toronto in the early Sixties, the savage merely extends the internal logic of a people's desire to feed their insecurity on home-grown heroes. Cultural sovereignity is the ostensible issue, but through Richler's wrong-ended telescope it comes out as the chauvinistic

fostering of mediocrity. Among the caricatures -- "characters" would be too strong -- is Bette Dolan, Canada's Darling, so called because she made a well-publicized swim of Lake Ontario. In this effort she was spurred on by her father, who held up signs indicating how much money is at stake, and after telling her she could quit and come in, kept the boat slightly out of her reach. Richler's parenthetical aside to this tale illustrates the cynically inverted perspective that characterizes the book: "(When Gord Dolan spoke on television several weeks later, after accepting the Canadian-Father-of-the-Year Award, he said, 'That was the psychology-bit. I've made a study of people, you know.')"[10]

Psychology and its discontents is one of the subthemes of Richler's attack: like Professor Vambrace facing Norm Yarrow in Davies' Leaven of Malice, he plays eiron against all the alazons who use psychology as an explanation for wrong behaviour. Thus, Rory Peel, the advertising executive who discovers Atuk and brings him to Toronto, pays his young son for obedience, offering him five dollars to come home, and settling for the price of ten: "Kids are easy, Rory thought, taking Garth by the hand. The trick is to use psychology." (IA, 46) In another case it is not used consciously, but a kind of reverse psychology keeps the marriage of Ruthy and Seymour Bone from breaking up. They are totally incompatible, but

> Each time this unconventional marriage was about to break up it was saved by the couple's conventional

> families. Ruthy's father would say, "A mixed marriage can never work," and thereby drive her back into Seymour's arms. Seymour's mother would say, "If you leave her we will forgive all and take you back," and send him lumbering back into her arms. (IA, 73-4)

Atuk plays the psychology game, as he does most, as well as anyone. When he meets Bette Dolan he tells her that he is unable to make love, and such is her helpfulness that she forces herself upon him, finally forcing him into the sex act with a judo hold. Afterwards, "Atuk wondered if she suspected that she had been seduced." (IA, 33)

Atuk inverts the stereotype of the innocent child of nature by his eagerness to be corrupted. He does it chiefly by role manipulation, for after he is taken to the glittering bosom of Toronto, a place "so rich in opportunities that an alert Eskimo could even make a start on his fortune while he slept," (IA, 47) he discovers that image is more important than fact, perhaps because people are so passive and debilitated that fantasy is all that can catch their attention. He also makes use of the fact that, as the episode of Bette and Gord Dolan indicates, success is its own justification. With this knowledge, Atuk proceeds to become "a Duddy Kravitz of the Arctic Circle,"[11] as one critic has called him.

As an entrepreneur, Atuk manages to exploit just about everyone. He brings his family down from Baffin Island and sets them up in a secret Eskimo sculpture factory, keeping them working by his "magic" trick of producing television on his TV set. Even his simple brethren catch the disease of

believing that their images as projected in the media are really them. Atuk has to warn his father, who is known as "Old One" since he was the subject of a prize-winning National Film Board short, about the affected primitiveness of his speech: "'You sound like you were auditioning for Disney again or something.'" (IA, 95)

In addition to being an Arctic Duddy Kravitz, Atuk is also a small Frye of the North: he accuses his father of having an "igloo mentality." (IA, 95) This may be seen as a farcical statement of a central problem in many of Richler's fictions, where a young Jewish boy splits with his family in search of wider horizons. Richler seems to travesty one of his favorite fictional situations as the "Old One" replies to his son's criticism:

> "It all begins with taking a bath. It seems a little compromise, I know. But one day you take a bath and the next you have turned your back on your own people. Now I suppose," he added contemptuously, "it is nothing for you to eat fish that has been cooked?" (IA, 96)

It does not take much imagination to see transposed in that last remark the familiar bitterness of a Richler father whose son has stopped eating kosher. The resemblance later becomes an identity when Richler, for no reason connected to his farrago of a plot, turns Atuk into a Jew. Through the influence of Rory Peel, who neuretically introduces himself to strangers by saying "I'm Jewish," Atuk accepts the role of martyr: "If you prick me, do I not bleed?" (IA, 129) he says, echoing Shylock's "Hath not a Jew" speech in The Merchant of

Venice. His actual conversion is of course motivated by ulterior reasons: he wants to marry Peel's wealthy sister.

Atuk is equally an exploiter of Torontonians, and Canadians in general. He turns into a one-man corporation selling Eskimo dolls, records, and above all his avaricious self. While scornful of the Eskimo stereotype -- he laughs at a woman who "goes in for the nose-rubbing bit" (IA, 130) -- Atuk exploits it, speaking a pidgin Eskimo gleaned from motion picture Indians to those who have that image of him. When he receives a pair of knitted socks from a fan, he is about to throw them away until his sophisticated media sense makes him reconsider:

> Treated properly this was just the kind of heartwarming story that would make a big splash in the western papers. "Develop," Atuk wrote on top of the lady's letter, "Hickville-wise." (IA, 68)

Most of the satire is either at the expense of the media or at the roles people absorb through contact with the media. For instance, Jean-Paul McEwen, a newspaperwoman who adopted a man's name "for nobody in Canada would take a woman columnist seriously," (IA, 115) is so much her role that everything in her life is grist for her typewriter: "A quarrel with her mother ended up as a thought-piece on parenthood and the letters she got about the column made for a humorous minutorial on Letters I Get." (IA, 115)

In the most absurd episode, she disguises herself as a man to research a story on an attempt by prostitutes to penetrate the teen market (or vice versa) -- for "even

whoremongers were betting on Canada's future." (IA, 116) She falls in love with an undercover RCMP officer disguised as a woman, and sends "her" photo into the Miss Canada contest where "she" becomes a finalist and eventually wins. At this point Miss Canada, Sgt. Jock Wilson, is ordered by his superior officer to maintain his disguise: "There's still the Miss Universe contest ahead of us." (IA, 180)

Even the RCMP are exuberantly travestied for being more interested in role-playing than in maintaining "le droit":

> Conners, sent out to crack a heroin ring, had ended up as a pusher. Manley, once the intellectual pride of HQ, had decided to bone up on Marx before joining the CP under a cover-name: today he did that scandalous broadcast to Canada from Moscow. And Seeley. Seeley had taken years, deliciously long years, to smash the white slave traffic in Vancouver. (IA, 91)

And Sgt. Jock's commandant is a parody of the "old school" soldier: "At Vimy, by George, you got your orders to go over the top, shot the first enlisted man through the head, and over the top everybody else went." (IA, 86)

The mandarins of Canadian culture are no mystery to Richler. There is the physical fitness expert, Doc Burt Parks: "'I'm world-famous,' Dr. Parks said, 'all over Canada.'" (IA, 40) (Doc Parks is reminiscent of the poet in Son of a Smaller Hero who "was famous for his lyrics throughout Outremont." (SSH, 197-8)) Then there is the drama critic, Seymour Bone, who "overate so much before attending his first play for the Standard that, though he was enjoying himself immensely, he simply had to flee before the end of the first

act" (IA, 74-5) -- earning banner headlines in the process. "Bone went to the theatre constipated and woke up a national figure." (IA, 75)

In this incestuous universe of Toronto celebrities, everyone who is anyone becomes a media personality. Norman Gore, the University professor who discovers Atuk, turns his dinner parties into a television program; those appearing on it include a football-star-turned-priest, and a rabbi who thinks that the Biblical quotation "Blessed are the meek . . ." lacks appeal: "Nobody today wants to be thought of as weak, a shmo, if you'll pardon me. We like to think of ourselves as lions." (IA, 104)

The media's involvement in the issue of national sovereignty first raised in the epigraph ("Cut off from American junk, Canada would have to produce her own") is cynically presented in the figure of Harry Snipes, modern poet and magazine editor, who proclaims "We stand for a Canadian national identity" (IA, 15) before cutting out an old story from Collier's for Atuk to re-write in the setting of Moose Jaw.

Nationalism is satirized near the end by the discovery that an American soldier missing in the tundra was in fact eaten by Atuk. In his defence, Canada's media arouse slumbering anti-Americanism. "IT'S A WONDER, the Tribune headline read, HE DIDN'T DIE OF PTOMAINE POISONING." (IA, 184) The academic community also rallies to the cause: "A University

of Toronto psychologist pointed out, 'Atuk's act was one of symbolic revenge. Culturally, economically, the Americans are eating our whole country alive.'" (IA, 182) Finally, Atuk is released to appear on a game show, and is guillotined when he loses the game, "Stick Your Neck Out."

This sort of grotesquely inverted farce seems most suitable to discussion by grouping quotations around themes as I have done. Since it is based neither on a plot nor a coherent theme, and the characters are inverted or composite stereotypes, (or as in the case of Atuk, both), the satire has more breadth than depth. Richler has admitted the problems that the satirist per se faces:

> You forego enlisting the reader's sympathy, and that's a pretty big thing to give up, because you're presenting somebody with the book and you're saying everyone in it is rotten in one way or another and so they don't engage, and it's difficult to keep the reader's attention.[12]

He specifically excepts from this statement The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz and St. Urbain's Horseman, wherein he has attempted to combine "round" characters with satire.

The critical reactions to The Incomparable Atuk have varied, but the consensus is that he could have made more (or if not more, better) of the situation than he did; however, it has never been claimed as more than a lightweight satirical entertainment. Richler himself has called it "a spoof."[13] But as F. W. Watt has written, "There is no question of disagreeing with Richler's criticism; the only question is, with what gravity does he offer it and do we receive it?"[14]

In reviewing the book for Canadian Literature, Warren Tallman called it "brilliantly conceived" and "a perfunctory performance"[15] and I think he is wrong on both counts, because it takes a certain amount of performing agility to hold together a farce that, among other things, takes on suburbia, adultery, dope, incest, Canadian nationalism, cannibalism, Toronto, miscegenation, homosexuality, television, transvestitism, racial prejudice, and the RCMP -- and the conception is hardly brilliant. The best critical comment I could find on this book was actually made about Cocksure, where it is much less pertinent; W. H. New wrote that "Richler, obviously having a go at assorted sacred Canadian cows, mostly succeeds in milking them dry."[16]

Certainly the book has a scatter-gun quality to it, some of it is simply vulgar, and parts of it maintain a satirical manner and tone without apparent justification -- are, in other words, nonsense. Also, Richler seems to have fallen a victim to one of the diseases he is trying to lance, the "inside" approach, for as Woodcock and others have noted it is at least in part a roman a clef; Seymour Bone, drama critic and host of Crossed Swords, is clearly based on the late Nathan Cohen, Jean-Paul McEwen may be meant for Pierre Berton, and so on.[17] Considered in the context of Richler's work, it seems no more than a fit of petulance, but it can be very amusing, and for some tastes a refreshing divertimento from the mass of Canadian books, which lean heavily toward

the sombre. Even if Richler had not admitted as much, its greatest influences would seem to be Nathanael West and Evelyn Waugh, particularly the former, and there particularly in his two lesser novellas, The Dream Life of Balso Snell, and A Cool Million. In the former West mocked pretentiousness in the creation and appreciation of culture; in the latter he wrote a pastiche parodying Horatio Alger in a Depression context. The state of things both in The Incomparable Atuk and Cocksure is as West expressed it when he wrote in a letter that "there is nothing to root for in my work, and what is worse, no rooters."[18]

It was West who sent many writers along the path to visions of the "ludicrous catastrophe" that became known as "black humour." The term does not denote something funny, although in Cocksure especially, Richler manages to be both grotesque and funny. But "black humour" derives originally from the black bile that was thought to be produced by the brain to cause melancholy; the term was minted anew by Andre Breton as "l'humour noir" in 1939 -- the meeting of the terrifying and ridiculous. Or as West, its spiritual father in American fiction, wrote in a manifesto, "We are the laughing morticians of the present."[19]

This is what Richler seems to be in Cocksure, his most blackly humoured book. It is intercut around two levels, or two plots: there is Mortimer Griffin, an expatriate Canadian working in publishing in London, and there is also the surreal

world of the Hollywood mogul Star Maker, the supreme symbol of decadent artifice. Both plots are realistically presented -- but not surprisingly in view of the author's statement that "Yes, I do find the real surreal."[20]

The satire on both levels is direct and fierce. On the first level, Mortimer is a conventionally handsome WASP who is "anything but cocksure in either the general or specifically sexual sense."[21] Because of his general insecurity, he becomes wrapped up in an unusual conflict over Jewishness. After a lecture he has given on Kafka's Jewish roots, he is accused of being a Jew by Jacob Shalinsky, a member of his audience. At succeeding lectures in his reading series he is badgered by the man, the editor of a magazine called Jewish Thought, to "admit" his Jewish background. At the same time he is vehemently accused of being an anti-semite by Hy Rosen, a neurotically sensitive Jewish friend and his rival for the editorship of the Oriole Press, where they both work.

Shalinsky has a point when he says that "A Jew is an idea,"[22] because Mortimer is empathetically a Jew; however, the oppressed minority to which he belongs is that of the "squares." Mortimer is always slightly derriere in a world where everyone else is relentlessly avant-garde, for the world of this book is peopled by primitives who seem suddenly to have inherited decadence and embraced it with the fervour of novitiates. Through Mortimer, Richler satirizes both the old conservatives (whom Mortimer feebly represents) and the

new conservatives, the religiously with-it. As Richler has said, "it sets out to attack all the trendies everywhere."[23]

Joyce, Mortimer's wife, is an uptight trendy. The contrast between them is signalled by their bedtime books: Mortimer settles in with The Best of Leacock, while Joyce reads Story of O. She is old-fashioned enough to feel some concern that Mortimer is apparently having relations with a beautiful black girl who works in his office -- "but at least she was coloured, which made the prospect interesting, even progressive, and so she would not be humiliated before her friends." (C, 101) Joyce takes a straightforward, rigidly rational approach to everything, including their young son Doug. When he comes to her bed looking for reassurance after a bad dream, she confronts him with the implications of the Oedipus complex. Her "honesty" is repressive, both in treating Doug like an adult and in her belief in the total efficacy of proper procedures and the dictates of fashion.

She is the force behind Doug's attendance at Beatrice Webb House, an elementary school so progressive that the Christmas play is an adaptation of the Marquis de Sade's Philosophie dans le Boudoir. The school is, in effect, an extention of Joyce's repressively honest with-it personality. De Sade is hailed as a "truth-sayer" (C, 23) and a hero by the teacher, whose charges are taught to abuse "sexually repressed bitches like Reggie's nanny" (C, 23) who disagree. The great comic set piece in this book is the production of

the school play based on De Sade's pornographic fantasies, and the ensuing home-and-school meeting at which one parent is hooted down for suggesting that girls of the fifth form practice coitus interruptus because she can't afford to keep fitting her growing daughter with diaphragms. Another's complaint that his thirteen-year-old -- the only girl in her form to stop at petting -- had come home with "T" for "tease" painted on her chest is shrugged off. The peer group pressures in a society where everyone wants to be considered avant-garde are deftly satirized along with runaway progressivism, where the most anti-establishment writer is hailed as the new establishment.

Despite his apparent with-it-ness due to his Hollywood leading man looks and his success in a prestigious profession, Mortimer is a failure as a "swinger." He feels sexually inadequate about the size of his penis, and compensates by purchasing ostentatiously large quantities of prophylactics, aphrodisiacs, and sexual aids and apparatus of all kinds, which at least gains him a reputation as a rake at his local pub. But his overflowing cupboard of these unused items is an ironic reminder that liberation is a state of mind.

In contrast to Mortimer's complex insecurity is the straightforward confidence of his friend Ziggy Spicehandler, the international hustler and soi-disant artist. Ziggy is the apotheosis of the boor: he has limited talents save self-promotion, and no morals to speak of (he cuckolds

Mortimer while his house-guest, in a faint echo of Noah Adler's stay with Theo and Miriam Hall). Ziggy is the traditional outsider bohemian, ugly, unclean, unkempt and personally repulsive, but the darling of a pop culture that scorns the values of the past as rigidly as they are supported by the most hidebound right-winger.

The media's influence in moulding this culture is illustrated by Mortimer's interview on the BBC. Mortimer faces a conspiracy against his conventionality by those, Joyce and Ziggy among them, whose idea of freedom is unquestioning adherence to the fascism of fashion. So Mortimer is tricked into being the scapegoat for the popular insulting interviewer, Dig Jones. It develops that Mortimer is one of the Canadian recipients of the Victoria Cross; for this he is viciously ridiculed, and the interviewer and studio audience laugh out loud at the stupidity of heroism in an unheroic age.

Part of the satire is aimed at the forgetfulness of those who have known world war, and at the younger generation that dismisses it indiscriminately. Among the former is Mortimer's boss, Lord Woodcock, so exaggeratedly in the British "fair play" tradition that after the war he "collected case histories and compiled a book, elegantly produced if necessarily slender, about all the charitable little acts done by Germans to Jews during the Nazi era." (C, 30) Lord Woodcock simplemindedly points out to Mortimer the beneficial aspects of carnage:

> underneath the meadows and parks of Germany there ran the most rare and nourishing of fertilizers -- rivers of human blood and mashed bone and burned flesh. This fertilizer in fact was said to be so enduring that to this day, according to the experts, it accounted for the incomparably succulent asparagus of the Schwartzwald and the recent fecund years enjoyed by the vineyards of the Rhine, thereby bringing dividends to gourmets the world over, regardless of race, colour or creed. (C, 33)

It is a grotesque image, but Richler seems to feel that to remember harshly is often a needed protection against forgetting.

Yet, conversely, it is part of Richler's message that the media have given their various publics too many shocks and too much sensationalism. It has worked to their detriment because nothing shocks any longer when anything that can be imagined is made possible and then quickly becomes passe. Even Ziggy, the totally "now" person, discovers this phenomenon when he calls the press together to announce that he is living openly with a woman novelist, and is greeted with boredom. With the democratization of decadence everyone is as jaded as Ziggy.

The overriding irony in Cocksure is found in its "super-plot." The media search for the sensational is ceaseless and exhaustive, yet the most shocking, most sensational story is right under their noses, or rather above them, that of Star Maker. The owner of major film studios, TV production companies and newspapers, in addition to other global interests, Star Maker is famous as the arbiter of thousands of careers, but has managed to keep his finest creation,

himself, a secret from the public. His powers of creation and destruction are so great that he is able to keep himself "ageless, undying" (C, 29) by amalgamating parts of the bodies of his employees as transplants, employing the most sophisticated medical techniques to keep all his physical systems in order. Star Maker, in fact, has brought "incorporation" from the world of finance to a physical reality.

Star Maker is an American; his connection with Mortimer Griffin's London comes when he buys the Oriole Press and commissions a series of biographies of contemporary everymen. It is not a publishing concept with obvious appeal, but Star Maker has a unique gimmick. He gives the series' subjects instant fame by having them sensationally, even luridly, murdered as soon as their biographies are ready for publication. As the book ends a biography is being written on Mortimer, whose "marvy lymph system" (C, 66) Star Maker covets. The satire cuts both ways: at the people who will sell their bodies as well as their souls to the organization, and at the power of life and death that is legendary in Hollywood high finance.

Star Maker is a surreal creation, more fantastic than Atuk, but the writing in Cocksure has a deadpan plausibility about it that gives it a greater effect. Star Maker is but an extention of the typical filmland mogul whose omnipotence can change the name, appearance, even personality of a chattel. Having made many others, recognizing the element of

artificiality, even illusion, in the medium, having even experimented with the literal creation of a star, Star Maker decides to become his own supreme achievement and greatest creation. Put another way, Star Maker wants to play God not only with the lives of others, but with his own life as well -- to become a God.

"Since God, the first self-contained creator, Mortimer, I am now able to reproduce myself. I will have a son." (C, 202) This idea came to Star Maker once, when in a moment of indiscretion his heir and assistant Dino Tomasso told him to "Go fuck yourself." (C, 3) And, with his narcissism and flair for the grandiose, that is exactly what he sets out to do. Dino thus loses his favoured position and becomes "incorporated" into his master's body. He eventually is relieved of both eyes, two fingers of his left hand, and his right leg. For obvious reasons, "The Star Maker cannot tolerate ill health among his people." (C, 34)

The consummate picture of success, Star Maker's narcissism and cannibalism are given a pseudo-philosophic justification when he tells Mortimer "Remember this, Griffin. The revolution eats its own. Capitalism recreates itself." (C, 135) For this reason Star Maker's insignia, "two snakes coupling," (C, 28) does not seem particularly apt -- since he is one snake coupling with himself -- and the ouroborous, the circular snake consuming itself by the tail, would perhaps have been better.

The conclusion of the book is symbolic, with the minions of Star Maker (himself the symbol of with-it-ness) closing in on Mortimer Griffin, the last lonely square, whose biography is already in preparation in the ironically named "Living History" series. Cocksure, like The Incomparable Atuk, is a book whose motive seems to lie not in the need to upbraid the foolish, nor to reduce them by public ridicule, but rather it seems to derive from frustration, expressed in a perverse exaggeration of whatever the author detests. There is a powerless sense of frustration with the sophistication by which the worst kinds of artificiality have gained power and the means of disseminating its message, which is self-propagation whatever the fashion. The culminating symbol of both these books is the Star Maker, for a false body is surely the pinnacle of the artificial in man's creation, and Star Maker, the extension of the American Dream, has made a Las Vegas of his body.

As I have previously noted, frustration is only one side of Richler's satire, the other, more complex, side being compassion. Compassion comes through a sympathetic inner understanding of a character who may be himself satirically indicted, who is in any case the focus for satirical judgments of those around him. The resulting satire is a strange hybrid form, as it combines the objective distance of satire with the subjective closeness of naturalism.

Richler's first attempt to tell a naturalistic story

within a satiric framework was The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz. One of the first things that should be established about this book is that entitling Duddy's life herein an apprenticeship is an act of cynicism. Eli Mandel has written that

> Duddy Kravitz's apprenticeship is a sorcerer's apprenticeship, bungled from the start, and it creates a series of appalling ironies and parodies, the grotesque and comic world of an aspiring magician who has got hold of the wrong end of the wand and cannot let it go.[24]

However, the cynicism here, regarding the capitalist as magician, is not the same as that which runs through Richler's previous books, for Duddy's virtues and vices are seen to be held in a complex and human, if unsteady, equilibrium.

Duddy's St. Urbain Street ghetto is much more vividly localized and thus more truly universalized than Noah Adler's, and the satire directed at its denizens seems to derive more from the directness of a confession or anatomy, than from the petulance of caricature. Richler's Montreal is like a Jewish joke from the inside --

> a little Jewish Guy was dying. Calls all the children over. He says "Children, I'm dying. Are you all here?" They say, "Yes, daddy, what do you want?" Old Jewish Guy says, "Who the hell is watching the store?"[25]

-- but he's saying, "That's no joke, that's my life." Certainly his illumination of ghetto-mannerisms by the use of telling details is more unsparing than anything in Canadian satire since Leacock's Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich, and it has the same nonchalant directness -- for instance,

this offhand description:

> Across the street at Stein's the bare-chested bakers worked with the door open even during the winter and, at school recess-time, were fond of winking at the boys outside and wiping the sweat from under their arm-pits with an unbaked kimel bread before tossing it into the oven.[26]

But this novel is by no means a series of ill-mannered jibes at the world Richler left behind. After preliminary education at Baron Byng High School (on St. Urbain near Rachel, it is usually, as here, called "Fletcher's Field High School") Richler enrolled at Sir George Williams College (which he has rendered as "Wellington College"). He dropped out in 1951 to go to Europe on money that his mother, like Noah Adler's mother, had saved in a fund at fifty cents a week. There, at the age of twenty-three, he published his first novel, The Acrobats, in 1954. The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz is his best fictional memoir of, in Paul Goodman's phrase, "growing up absurd" in Montreal, and it is so chiefly because of the vividness of the central character, who stands always in the foreground.

Duddy Kravitz must be one of the most unprepossessing characters in Canadian fiction. We are told that "Where Duddy Kravitz sprung from the boys grew up dirty and sad, spiky also, like grass beside the railroad tracks." (ADK, 45) Duddy, "A small, narrow-chested boy of fifteen with a thin face," (ADK, 9) has a persecution complex and a chip on his shoulder because he feels that most people, his teachers included, look down on him because his father, "Max the Hack,"

is a Jew and a taxi-driver.

He is a leader of the unruly element at school, and as he has an instinct for other people's weaknesses he persecutes Mr. MacPherson, a teacher who won't use violence on his pupils. When MacPherson finally releases his frustrations verbally against him, Duddy begins a plan of telephone harassment that causes the death of MacPherson's invalid wife when she receives one of his obscene phone calls. MacPherson takes to drink; his parting shot at Duddy, "You'll go far, Kravitz," (ADK, 40) is a prediction with ironic accuracy.

The prediction is fulfilled as Duddy hustles his way upward -- as a waiter, salesman, taxi driver, film producer, and a real estate speculator who eventually acquires all the land around a small lake in the Laurentians. Later in the book he remembers MacPherson's prophecy in a guilty dream. Although he keeps too busy to realize it consciously, it is a measure of his failure as a man that he succeeds in jungles of finance where a disadvantaged, ambitious boy like himself must be singlemindedly ruthless to achieve his ambitions.

He finds that the same business standards operate whether he is in the Jewish ghetto or in the wider world: you either were born with money, like Calder, the bored Upper Westmount type who had "made money with his father's money," (ADK, 193) or you took it from someone else, like Cohen the scrap merchant, who tells him

> "There's not one successful businessman I know, Duddy, who hasn't got something locked in the

> closet. A fire, maybe. A quick bankruptcy, the swindling of a widow . . . funny business with a mortgage . . . a diddle with an insurance agent. It's either that or you go under, so decide right now." (ADK, 264)

But Duddy needs no such prompting, he had decided long ago. Indeed, he has gotten his independent film production company off the ground by telling Cohen he would make a film of his son's bar mitzvah cheaper than he would do the same film for his competitor Seigal.

Duddy has a keen instinct for the main chance, and he is willing to ignore distinctions between ghetto traditionalism and melting-pot modernism. He does this most comically in the film of Bernie Cohen's bar mitzvah, which his unstable associate Peter John Friar has made into an impressionistic avant-garde experiment featuring a grotesque parody of art-film montage, ("A lion roars. Close-shot of Bernard's left eye. A pair of black panties catch fire." (ADK, 156)), and affected narration ("Older than the banks of the Nile, not so cruel as the circumcision rite of the Zulus, and even more intricate than a snowflake is the bar mitzvah. . . ." (ADK, 152)). The members of the audience, who have a profound respect for what they don't understand, and who moreover approve of things "modern" on principle, are pleased and impressed.

"You'll go far Kravitz" is just one of a number of key phrases, repeated leit-motifs that vary the satiric themes and maintain continuity among them. His father's identity phrase "When I lose my temper I lost my temper"

(ADK, 161) recalls his loveless belief that Duddy is wrong in any dispute. Max Kravitz, a taxi-driver, part-time pimp, and local windbag, is always losing his temper with Duddy before he becomes a financial success. To his father the young Duddy is always in the wrong. Duddy persists until he wins his father's respect and affection, but the price exacted in human terms is not worth the respect of a pathetic man whose corrupt fantasies are all that his son inherits. All that Duddy learns from Max is singlemindedness -- "When I lose my temper I lose my temper" becomes Duddy's intention to get what he wants regardless of the consequences.

Max's hero is Jerry Dingleman, a hoodlum who has made it from St. Urbain Street to a position of prominence in the local rackets, and he did it, as Max is fond of recounting, by parlaying three cent bus transfers found in the street into a fortune. Known as "the Boy Wonder," Dingleman uses Max's adulation on one occasion to procure Duddy's unwitting services to smuggle in heroin from the United States, and later tries to cheat him out of his lake in the Laurentians. The reason that he fails and is ignominiously driven from the land is that Duddy has become the new "Boy Wonder" by cheating those who have loved him of time and money, especially his girlfriend, Yvette. He has also been responsible for the serious injury of his friend, the epileptic Virgil. At the end he has fulfilled his father's ideal and his own dream: "Duddy wanted to be a somebody. Another Boy Wonder maybe.

Not a loser, certainly." (ADK, 62) While Duddy is responsible for his actions, his father's transmitted ideals are partly to blame for the fact that, in human terms, he is a loser.

In part the satire is directed at the young capitalist on the make, a mordant exposure of what can be lost in the pursuit of capital gains. But Duddy is also compassionately seen as a loyal son and brother, because his only allegiance is to his family, and this loyalty is his greatest redeeming virtue. He generously offers all his tips from a summer's work as a waiter to his brother Lennie, the favoured son who is going to medical school at McGill. When Lennie foolishly mismanages an abortion, fleeing in disgrace to Toronto, it is Duddy who finds him and convinces Calder, the girl's father, not to have him expelled. And it is Duddy who finds and returns with Aunt Ida, the philandering wife of rich Uncle Benjy who, like Max, has given all his affection and favours to Lennie.

The phrase associated with Uncle Benjy relates to Duddy's own equally ambiguous success: "Imagine not being able to get it up" (ADK, 173) has ironic ramifications in that Benjy is a successful factory owner but, like Duddy, unsuccessful in human terms -- his wife has left him for a succession of gigolos. From her Duddy learns that, contrary to popular opinion, Benjy is not impotent, but his stunted relationship with his father bodes ill for Duddy, who has

the same problem:

> "The father-figure has dominated Benjy since he was a child. He was always afraid that if he did something wrong the old man's love would be withdrawn and he grew to hate him for it. So he hurt him the worst way he could. He told him he was impotent." (ADK, 237)

Benjy and Duddy are connected by the fact that their worldly success is partly at the expense of their assurance of manhood. Benjy calls Duddy "a pusherke" -- "a little Jew-boy on the make" (ADK, 242) -- but he later realizes they are more alike than he thought.

While Robertson Davies uses foils to give his characters satiric contrast, Richler uses doppelgangers to point up Duddy's shared humanity with those whom he resembles or has affected. Benjy and Duddy form one such pair, as do Duddy and Dingleman.

Uncle Benjy eventually dies of his real complaint, stomach cancer, or as Lennie tells Duddy, "Anatomy's the big killer." (ADK, 20) It is a phrase that he is fond of repeating, and one that seems to apply to many people, whose physiques mirror their spiritual ill health. By these words Lennie refers to one of his subjects at McGill, but his attempt to interfere with the Calder girl's pregnancy has ironic implications for the phrase, as do a number of instances of physical decay and death in the book. Anatomy is almost the big killer of Virgil, the epileptic who suffers a crippling injury when he has a fit while driving for Duddy; he has another serious fit when he learns by phone that Duddy

has swindled him of a thousand dollars to buy land. The motif of the telephone message to an invalid links Duddy's beginnings with his rise in the world, and makes Virgil and Mrs. MacPherson a doppelganger pair: they are both invalids who receive evil from Duddy by phone. When Mr. MacPherson finds his wife's body, "The receiver dangled idiotically from the hook above her" (ADK, 32); at the peak of his triumph, Duddy and Yvette return home to find invalid Virgil has had a fit on learning of Duddy's treachery: "Above him the telephone receiver dangled loosely." (ADK, 306)

Anatomy is also the downfall of "the Boy Wonder," who suffers from polio. The future bodes ill for Duddy who, like his uncle and Dingleman before him, is sacrificing his health in pursuit of success. We are given an intimation that Duddy is being prematurely aged by his swift rise. Yvette tells him that Virgil wanted to know "if you had a wife and children. He thought you were thirty-five at least." (ADK, 211) But Duddy is still in his teens at the book's end. This scene ironically parallels an earlier one when Duddy is amazed to find that Friar, his film-maker, has designs on Yvette: "'Gwan.' He clapped Mr. Friar on the back. 'You're old enough to be her father.'" (ADK, 181) Duddy has symbolically and physically aged beyond his years in the course of the book. He has also been replaced in Yvette's affections by a cripple (Virgil), just as he replaces another cripple (Dingleman) as the latest "boy wonder," and in so doing has

alienated those who loved him and become an emotional cripple.

Perhaps his most painful alienation is from his zayda (grandfather), Simcha Kravitz. Simcha has told him that "A man without land is nobody" (ADK, 48) and Duddy has believed the old man's dream, later misquoting it as "A man without land is nothing." (ADK, 197) Simcha is like Noah's maternal grandfather in Son of a Smaller Hero: Jacob Goldenberg lived in the ghetto and composed "Wild, yearning poems written in Yiddish that . . . celebrated fields and forests that he had never known." (SSH, 33) Simcha is much the same, tending a small garden in his ghetto back yard, and dreaming of the immigrant's promised land. Duddy sacrifices the old man's real beliefs in honesty and integrity to realize his fantasy. By corrupting his zayda's ideals he loses his love as well as that of others in the book, and loses also the benefit of his own warped generosity and love.

His own fantasies for the land are not the simple agricultural ones of Simcha, but the fantasies of an entrepreneur whose love is lost in his overweening need to be respected.

> There could have been his grandfather on the farm and everybody saying how Duddy was the easiest touch in town, allowing ten St. Urbain Street boys into the camp free each season . . . building a special house for the epileptic who had been hurt working for him in those bygone days of his struggles, and giving so many benefit nights for worthy causes. (ADK, 281)

Simcha himself is a contradiction of his own motto. A respected man, a leader in the community, he has the smallest

of lots to call his own. Duddy is able to acquire a whole lake and its surrounding acreage, but has forfeited the real respect that Simcha commands for the respectful envy of the small-minded, like his father. So his zeyda must reject his tainted triumph:

> "I can see what you have planned for me, Duddel. You'll be good to me. You'd give me everything I wanted. And that would settle your conscience when you went out to swindle others." (ADK, 312)

Duddy's search for land is symbolically a search for identity and respect -- but he ends up with nothing greater than credit at his father's hangout. The only person who approves of him is Max, but as his brother Benjy says, "Max is not very bright." (ADK, 242) Max the Hack admires him as he has admired Dingleman, and in the last scene he is talking about his exploits in the same hyperbolical way he used to praise Dingleman. Behind his words is the implication that Duddy is the new Boy Wonder. But mastery does not mean maturity. Duddy has acquired an estate, but it is not "man's estate." He is a wonder, but only a boy wonder. A man without land may be nothing, but an emotionally stunted land baron is still only a boy. As W. H. New has written, "to be somebody is to be an adult, not only in the self, but also recognized as being adult by a world to which the self bears some relationship."[27]

The only person who realizes Duddy's wasted potential is Benjy, who in a letter Duddy reads after his death, explains how Duddy is in a sense his own doppelganger:

> There's more to you than mere money-lust, Duddy, but I'm afraid for you. You're two people, that's why. The scheming little bastard I saw so easily and the fine, intelligent boy underneath that your grandfather, bless him, saw. But you're coming of age soon and you'll have to choose. A boy can be two, three, four potential people, but a man is only one. He murders the others. (ADK, 279)

The reader is left with the clear impression that "the scheming little bastard" has done in "the fine, intelligent boy." But, in another phrase Duddy is fond of repeating, "That's show biz." (ADK, 209) This phrase is picked up from Cuckoo Kaplan, a "borscht belt" comic Duddy meets in the Laurentians. Cuckoo uses it to explain his constant failure to achieve success in show business; Duddy uses it, with the same irresponsible fatalism, to explain why his success has hurt others.

The satire in this book, keyed as it is to revealing phrases from "You'll go far, Kravitz" to "That's show biz," is based on a vision of society, especially the Jewish community, where the conflict between traditional and modern modes of living is particularly intense. A related conflict is the drive for success among society's disadvantaged. Within this vision, satire and naturalism are well blended as the characters and events are brought into focus around the character of Duddy. As George Woodcock has written:

> Fantasy shapes the main action of the novel, yet the form is traditional, and there is enough of realism to make Duddy and his actions credible on two levels. They are plausible enough for us to see him alive in our mind's eyes, but they are also exaggerated enough to become an efficient vehicle of satire.[28]

Duddy, as Kildare Dobbs once noted in Tamarack Review,

is no "lovable rogue" but "a genuine son-of-a-bitch who will stop at nothing to get what he wants."[29] Yet his brief career encompassed by the novel is only by implication a moral warning, for there is a strong feeling in the book that while he could have done things much better, he couldn't have done them much differently, given his ambitions and his background. We have a sense of authorial compassion for Duddy, whose search for a Promised Land is achieved with such difficulty. But his chosen people have been left behind, along with the commandments, so that Moses/Duddy can make it alone -- for as Eli Mandel has noted, the novel is "a parody of the Exodus story."[30] Mandel, in reviewing it for Queen's Quarterly, wrote very cogently on how the character of Duddy brings together the strains of satiric insight and compassion:

> Since the low perspective of the rogue throws a ghastly light over the face of the society he views, in one of its effects the rogue's tale is satiric, and since the rogue's travels parody a quest, in another of its effects his tale is pathetic.[31]

Duddy has his own kind of honesty, and also a kind of underdog charm, but pathos enters because the reader realizes that the game is not worth the candle:

> Look at me, he thought, take a good look because maybe I'm dirt now. Maybe I've never been to Paris and I don't know a painter from a horse's ass. . . . I don't speak dirty like you either. You make fun of your father. You don't like him. Tough shit. But he sends you to Europe and Mexico and who pays for those drinks in the afternoon? You're sorry for making a fool out of me. Gee whiz, my heart bleeds. Take a good look, you dirty bitch. Maybe I'm dirt today. . . . But you listen here, kiddo. It's not always going to be like this. If you want to bet on something then bet on me. I'm going to be a somebody and that's for sure. (ADK, 95)

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz is about how he works toward becoming a "somebody." In St. Urbain's Horseman, a quasi-sequel, Jake Hersh, a minor figure in the previous book, has become a somebody and is trying to deal with his guilt and anxiety. This is a brilliant novel, not so dependent on Richler's earlier works that "only those who have followed Richler's work . . . will be able to appreciate the achievement it is,"[32] but nevertheless the culmination of most of his concerns as a writer. The expatriate colony in London, where Jake has lived for some years, the pixilated world of the media, in which Jake makes his living as a film director, and Canada, which he has left but not forgotten, are old themes for Richler's satire, but the treatment is fresh and exciting. The reasons for its freshness are numerous: the wealth of details, skilfully presented, the masterful handling of a number of related plots, the combination of the mundane and the mysterious that is at the book's core, and the sensitive portrayal of life's ironies through the interior monologues of Jake, which control the tone and use flashbacks very effectively.

Jake is certainly the most compassionate figure in Richler's fiction, and while it might be argued that he doesn't have much competition in this regard, the compassion his story produces suggests a slight re-ordering of approach for Richler. Simply put, The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz was an exposure, but St. Urbain's Horseman is a confession.

It is not the first of Richler's books to rely on the first person voice, but whereas the thoughts of a Noah Adler or Norman Price seem to be objectified attitudes written into the first person for verisimilitude, and a Mortimer Griffin or Atuk is just a puppet, in Jake Hersh he has created a complex, human character. Robert Fulford agrees, "this time Richler has pushed far beyond anecdote and opinion, into the denser, more rewarding world of fantasy rooted in experience."[33]

To be more specific, the fantasy is really two fantasies. One is the "rape" of Ingrid, a German au pair girl, for which Jake must stand trial with Harry Stein. Stein is a repulsively fascinating accountant with delusions of grandeur and persecution; it was he who lured the girl to Jake's house for a "screentest," using Jake's name. Jake arrives home unexpectedly into the middle of a sexual fantasy that has socio-political overtones in the light of his obsession with the Nazi destruction of six million of his people. The related theme, his personal fantasy of St. Urbain's Horseman, is a fantastic projection of the erratic career of his cousin Joey, who is like himself a St. Urbain Street boy, and a wandering Jew.

When Jake rides on Ingrid's back in Joey's saddle he is effectively releasing himself from his fantasy of Joey as "superjew" avenger, Death's horseman of apocalypse riding a white horse (Joey's "magnificent Pleven"[34]) against the

assassins of Jews. Through Jake's enactment of the pathetic fantasy of riding Ingrid -- who is incidentally the daughter of a dentist -- as he imagines Joey riding roughshod over Germans, he is able to release himself from the greater fantasy of St. Urbain's Horseman.

It is ironic that his sensational sex trial dominates the exterior action, because Jake's involvement with Ingrid is not in its main component sexual, but rather a pathetically cathartic vengeance of recent racial memory.

Jake, unlike any of Richler's previous protagonists is -- "extraordinary circumstance" (SUH, 273) -- happily married. His anxieties and guilts stem as much from his favoured position in society as from any sins of commission. Unto Joey he projects an idealization of himself as a Jew, so Joey is fantasized as "the great man Jake never dared to be, a combination of the Messiah and Errol Flynn."[35] And underlying his frustration is an anger that invades his dreams:

> Anger both at the Nazis for their crimes and at the Jews who allowed themselves to be killed. Anger at those of his fellows who allow themselves to make compromises with the community within which they are living; who become less Jewish to achieve a semblance of peace.[36]

In this necessarily skeletal introduction to the novel satire is hardly apparent. Yet an appreciation of its satiric element cannot be gained without regard to its overriding concerns. Jake's "terrible self-awareness"[37] is a product of his time, a generation caught between the horrors of the past -- especially poignant for Jews -- and the ambiguous security of

the present, which is not without its own horrors, as reflected in Jake's collection of newspaper clippings.

While St. Urbain's Horseman cannot be classed as a "satire," it is important as an example of a modern variant form, the satire as autobiography. Granted that the autobiography is fictional and that we read it in other voices as well as Jake's; interior monologues of Harry, Nancy, and Jake's mother are part of it, as is Richler's narrative voice, but the main stream is clearly satirical autobiography, the satire of the self in one's own mind. This is of course a satirical procedure clearly distinct from the traditional moralistic stance of satirizing other people's lives. The change in the concept of the character and in the possibilities for characters impinging upon the reader's sense of compassion need not be laboured here, except to note that greater understanding promotes greater acceptance. But what is chiefly important is that Richler uses the more complex character of Jake Hersh to focus on the ironic dimensions of twentieth century living. Through appreciating Jake's guilts and anxieties, the reader participates in the satire, and assimilates ironies in a way akin to the physical process of osmosis.

The range of the satire is broad. Almost all of Richler's targets are present to greater and lesser degrees; Jewish families, the workings of people in the media, Canadians, "with-it" people, and the upper crust are all

merrily boiled up with the rest of the leftovers in Richler's gallimaufry; and like most good stews, Richler's satura is even better reheated. Having once described himself as a "loser's advocate,"[38] it may be that Richler is showing how Jake is a loser, contrary to appearances, and despite the fact that his personal losses are relatively small. This, by a circular process, is the main reason for his guilt.

> It began well, ritualistically well. You have a gorgeous wife. Three kids. You're loved. All the same you've managed to remain an alienated Jew. Modishly ugly. But at thirty-seven you are a disappointment to yourself, a washout. . . . (SUH, 14)

From the dialectical examination of guilt comes self-mocking satire:

> Jake feared that a felicitous marriage not only reflected poorly on Nancy and him, stamping them superficial, tin-like, but it was also bad for the kids. Everybody he admired, his most imaginative and resourceful friends, had emerged from afflicted homes. Dad a zero, mom a carnivore. Parents so embittered that they wrote off their own lives and toiled only for the children's sake. Divorced parents, vying shamelessly for the kids' affections. Quarreling, lying, but, inadvertently, shaping rebels. Hammering out artists. Whereas in their home there was only symmetry, affection, parents who took pleasure in each other's company. (SUH, 280)

Jake is obsessed with the effect of things he cannot change. He is a Canadian, a Jew, a member of a certain generation that is "Always the wrong age. Ever observers, never participants. The whirlwind elsewhere." (SUH, 80) Despite his affluence, and his work in films, Jake doesn't consider himself "with-it"; he remembers being part of an orgiastic party ten years ago where he had been more observer

than participant. In this, as in a number of other things, Jake is like Norman Price, who was described as being "like the sober one at an orgy." (CE, 11) "Even in Paris," Jake recalls, "I remained a Canadian. I puffed hashish, but I didn't inhale." (SUH, 11) Jake exemplifies a typical problem for Richler's characters: "They insist that salvation lies only in the adoption of personal values, but they are not sure which personal values to hold."[39]

For most of these characters, "much of their energy is consumed by the strategies of survival in a competitive and hostile world."[40] It is not so for Jake. In the words of the prosecuting attorney at his trial, "He is so successful in his chosen field that he earns rather more annually than the prime minister of this country." (SUH, 416) But that is not enough: "Jake craved answers, a revelation, something out there, a certitude, like the Bomb before it was discovered. Meanwhile, he was choked with self-disgust." (SUH, 282) And, also, suspicion: "Why am I being allowed to enjoy myself? The Gods raise you, only the better to strike you down." (SUH, 283-4)

Jake measures time's passage by the changed world his children will face; for Sammy, "Comes his bar mitzvah, he thought, no fountain pens. Instead his first nickel bag. 'Today you are a man, bubala. Turn on'." (SUH, 9) Projecting into the future, he feels an equal revulsion for the ignominious past and the ingloriously comfortable future: "In

three generations, from foxy Jews to fox-hunting ones. What next? Lord Hersh of St. Urbain?" (SUH, 10)

A visit to his family, community and native land are a reminder that while he cannot completely reassume that life, he can never really escape it. While his family history is presented more comprehensively than usual, the characters themselves are familiar members of the Mordecai Richler Repertory Company. His father Issy, for whose funeral he returns, is a maker of bad jokes and a bad joke himself. Like Max Kravitz, he is impressed not by what Jake is but by what he has acquired and who he knows -- Jackie Gleason, for instance. Jake's reaction to the eulogistic statement that Issy Hersh didn't have an enemy is "Or a friend." (SUH, 361) None of his relatives seem to him to have grown as he feels he has grown. The frustration this causes him is vented against Uncle Abe's son Irwin, "this lump of shit" (SUH, 386) Jake calls him, and the personification of his feeling that Jews in Montreal are getting no wiser, no nobler, only more comfortable.

Joey is the only rebel in the family who has not given in; Jake only fantasizes his rebellions, and Jenny, his adolescent passion, has married a pseudo-intellectual Toronto playwright for his social position. Remembering how Jenny once excited him "with her Modern Library books, her map of the Paris metro and line drawings of Keats" (SUH, 128) Jake is let down when she tells him, "I applied myself to learning and literature with a kind of hatred for it, so that if I ever

fell in with what I think of as the blessed, talented people, I would understand the references. . . ." (SUH, 143) But Jenny now only gets to talk to phonies like her husband.

In his search for Joey, Jake finds out little that is definite. Joey may have visited Trotsky in Mexico, he probably fought in Spain, and in Israel in 1948. He played professional baseball, and was seen in a Randolph Scott western; he later appeared as Jesse Hope, a country singer, in Munich. Before that he lived on a kibbutz in Israel with a woman he married, fathered a child by, and deserted. At various times he has been suspected as a con man, blackmailer, and hashish smuggler. But to Jake he is the Golem, a body without a soul who wanders the world defending Jews from persecution. Jake finds some evidence that Joey is investigating the whereabouts of Dr. Mengele, a notorious Auschwitz butcher who is thought to be living in Paraguay. Jake imagines him tracking down Mengele and pulling gold fillings from his teeth. Uncle Abe thinks differently: "'if he is hunting this Nazi down and finds him . . . he won't kill him, he'll blackmail him.'" (SUH, 31)

But Jake believes, because St. Urbain's Horseman is both his conscience and a fantastic representation of his unheroic self. As Joey is his conscience, he tries to base his work "on what he imagined to be the Horseman's exacting standard. . . . For somewhere he was watching, judging." (SUH, 290)

In both his real and mythical aspects, Joey is manifestly Jake's doppelganger; it is not surprising, then, that Jake's identity is twice confused with Joey's -- once when he is taken from a train and denied entry to the United States because he is mistaken for Joey, a "known communist," and once when he receives Joey's mail at Canada House in London. An important question regarding our evaluation of the book is Jake's identification with Joey, because at times it is strikingly similar to Duddy Kravitz' imaginary brother, Bradley, who, among other adventures, "had run away to the States at fifteen, lied about his age, joined the air force, and sunk three Jap battleships in the Pacific. They were going to make a movie about his life, maybe." (ADK, 14) While Joey, on one level, is a conscience that should never die, on another he is an adolescent fantasy that Jake must outgrow as he has outgrown his ghetto origins.

In the fantasy role of St. Urbain's Horseman that Jake has projected onto him, Joey is an abstract superhuman, the soulless, eternal Golem. The Golem, like the Horseman, is a senseless, mechanical creature, an artificial human. Jake is keenly aware of his own mortality. In fact, he is obsessed with the idea of physical decay, and in a sense sees his physical frailty (real and potential) as a satire on his aspirations. He is fascinated with the possibilities of physical malfunctions: he watches a TV program for the deaf, "so that should his hearing fail he would not have to learn

lip-reading from scratch. . . . ." (SUH, 319) He indulges himself in morbid fancies, imagining that a fast heartbeat signals acute tachcardia, or that his baby son shows signs of locomotor ataxia. His neurotic imagination is fired by grotesque images of death and destruction as they appear in the media, especially newspapers, which do not miss much that has a morbid appeal. With stories about an armless, legless girl, or an actor's experience with cancer of the rectum, they state a theme that Jake sees as contrapuntal to his life, and seem to mock both his good health and his hopes for the future.

It is appropriate, with Jake's penchant for fantasy and his heightened sense of the ephemeral, that he works in television and film. His inability to focus upon reality is emphasized by the book's constantly retrospective thought-stream presentation, and by his greater absorption with the Horseman than with his sensational sex trial. Ironically, the prosecution bases its case against him upon that very thing, that in his involvement with Ingrid he did not separate fantasy from reality; in the words of the prosecutor, "he wished to direct real people in x-certificate scenes, as it were." (SUH, 416)

Richler's characters are seen satirically, but generally in a complex and compassionate way, the degree of satire varying considerably within the overall perspective. But in its examination of life within the communications and entertainment business, there is a scene of direct and undiluted

satire that is one of Richler's best. This of course is the comic set piece of the Sunday morning softball game on Hampstead Heath. The competition among men whose tenuous positions are so dependent upon the good will of their contacts results in hilarious examples of double- and triple-think. The contrast between this and the relaxed fellowship and spontaneous fun that the game should provide indicates that these people cannot relax from the roles they play. The participants want to "play ball" with those who will further their careers; the other game is unimportant.

The traditional conference on the mound between pitcher and catcher leads to a discussion of "shop talk" rather than baseball strategy. At bat Matty Gordon, a producer, worries not only about how his team and the opposing pitcher will feel should he get a hit, but also about his relationship with the individual basemen: "If come a miracle he connected for a triple" he would "be stuck on third sack with Bob Cohen, strictly second featuresville, a born loser, and Manny didn't want to be seen with Bob, even for an inning, especially with so many producers and agents about." (SUH, 224) Late in the game, when an athletic black comes to bat against a formerly blacklisted writer on the mound, the pressure on their performance of roles is intense:

> Big black Tom Hunt, who had once played semi-pro ball in Florida, was a militant. If he homered, Hunt felt he would be put down for another buck nigger, good at games, but if he struck out, which would call for rather more acting skill than was required of him on the set of Othello X, what then? He would enable a

> bunch of fat, foxy, sexually worried Jews to feel big, goysy. Screw them, Hunt thought. (SUH, 228)

The pitcher, Gordie Kaufman, is equally concerned with his image:

> I must bear down on Hunt, Gordie thought, because if he touches me for even a scratch single I'll come off a patronizing ofay. If he homers, God forbid, I'm a shitty liberal. And so with the count 3 and 2, and a walk, the typical social democrat's compromise, seemingly the easiest way out for both men, Gordie gritted his teeth, his proud Trotskyite past getting the best of him, and threw a fast ball right at Hunt, bouncing it off his head. (SUH, 228-9)

These men are successful and ridiculous, "overpaid and unprincipled" (SUH, 230), much like Jake's old schoolmate, Duddy Kravitz, who turns up several times in this book. Duddy's appearances here confirm our expectations of him: he is fabulously wealthy, and still fundamentally insecure, but without his earlier vitality. He has made millions on such ventures as a diet pill that contains a tapeworm, and a Canadian Jewish Who's Who. But he is not happy. Married to an actress that he loves, he attracts misfortune by cheating on her, explaining, "she's bound to be unfaithful to me sooner or later. It's in the cards. Why should I be the one to look like a fool? This way I get my licks in first." (SUH, 195) Besides, "Who in the hell could love Duddy Kravitz?" (SUH, 196) He has gotten everything he wanted, and it has been almost a punishment; "Gone are the guilty pleasures, the dirty secret joys." (SUH, 428)

Another friend of Jake, and a doppelganger of equal importance to Joey is Harry Stein, a resentful middle-class

accountant who is the principal figure in the sex trial in which Jake is co-defendant. Throughout Richler's career as a "loser's advocate," making "a persistent attempt to make a case for the ostensibly unsympathetic man,"[41] he has created no one as fascinatingly odious as Harry. Harry is the symbol of sordid reality in Jake's life, as Joey is the symbol of fantasy; Harry represents petty malevolence, as opposed to Joey's global vengeance. Like Joey, Harry's identity is confused with Jake's; he lures Ingrid to Jake's home, which Jake has loaned him, by assuming Jake's identity as a well-known director. Harry has a high intelligence quotient, but is frustrated by his lowly social position, and by his frequent contact with the rich and famous, Jake among them, who make far more money than he; Jake is "being paid more monthly not to work than I take home in a year." (SUH, 316)

This all makes Harry, on one hand, a sycophant, and on the other a vindictive spirit who scratches a new Rolls-Royce for spite. For him, as for Jake, awareness is not enough: "I knew what I was missing and that's always been my trouble." (SUH, 341) He has a prison term in his background, and also the habit of making obscene phone calls to starlets. Even Harry's dreams are sordid: he would like to be able to capture, and sell, the farts of stars. Yet he is still able to jibe passive Jake, "I've got the courage to do things you only dream of." (SUH, 350) Harry is a subtle, satiric, and mundane

reversal of Joey in Jake's life. Jake dreams the glory of St. Urbain's Horseman, but he lives with the malevolent, embittered Harry.

"Nowadays," says Jake at one point, ". . . everybody is a black humorist." (SUH, 360) Jake is one as much as anyone, and his imagination is perhaps more graphic than most, but the reader's sense of his worth as a character comes through simply because he is more than that -- or, rather, because we are able to see more of him than that. The flippant resignation of one of his friends, who says "if we're all on the Titanic, at least I'm going down first class." (SUH, 82) strikes a response in Jake, but does not resolve anything. His own attitude is more like: what's the point of having a deck chair on the Titanic? But he has not quit trying to be aware and creative in the face of despair; he is fond of quoting Auden (whose epigraph first indicates the theme of compassion confronting absurdity) that "Not all the candidates pass." (SUH, 187)

Jake is by no means a totally sympathetic or laudable character. Among the external information about him we find that he cheats on his income tax, though he can afford to pay it. Yet he has virtues that redeem him: he is not tempted by adultery because

> given the opportunity he simply liked Nancy too much to humiliate her. He could not abide the idea of her being introduced to another woman at a party, his afternoon's vagary, the other woman throbbing with secret knowledge. (SUH, 276-7)

Warren Tallman, whom I find an annoyingly eccentric critic most of the time, has made a telling point about Richler's authorial scepticism in this book: "Just as it cuts against everybody's pretensions that they are better than they actually are, it cuts against fears that they are worse."[42] This in itself is nothing new -- we have already seen how Leacock used the same approach, though on the level of caricature, in Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town. But it is an important point to make for Richler, with whom such a balance of compassion with indictment is not readily associated. This ambiguity of judgment, what was earlier termed the appeal to subjective norms, is what is most modern about Richler's satire, as further reference to Ellen Leyburn's article confirms:

> So far as judgment is involved at all, it seems to be a condemnation of the forces which have destroyed the humanity of the grotesque or pitiful beings who figure in such works. If the standards of human value still operate, they do so as a measure of the loss of humanity. But men are not held accountable for the loss. What we are led to question is what has brought them to this pass rather than the inadequacies of the characters themselves or their deviation from any accepted standard. Indictment, if it is present, is directed at the plight of man rather than at his failure to deal with it. Satire, which we have thought of as fundamentally optimistic in the assumption that man is worth correcting, seems to have become in much current practice a way of dealing with hopelessness or cynicism -- very different attitudes even from the bitterness which has often brought satire near to invective. If writing motivated by the feeling of the Absurd is to be called satire, we shall be compelled to enlarge again the elastic term which has often before been stretched to embrace new modes of writing and new categories of criticism.[43]

The satire of St. Urbain's Horseman, then, is of a greater complexity and subtlety and a lesser directness and vehemence than either in Richler's own previous work, or in what has been considered the satirical norm. Metaphorically it might be expressed as the surgeon turning the scalpel upon himself, without anaesthetic, and frequently it is a very blunt instrument. Or perhaps Earl Rovit was correct when he wrote, "The satirist is no longer capable of exposing a victim to the ridicule of having a pie thrown in his face; instead, he pushes the pie in his own face."[44]

The strongly autobiographical tone of this work allows for more complexity in the way in which satire is presented: part of the satire is confessional or accusatory as it occurs in Jake's mind, and part of it is juxtapositional, involving the reader's more imaginative participation in contrasting, for instance, Jake's dreams of the Horseman with the scandalous trial that is the result of his real life with Harry.

Where the satirist has traditionally traded in omniscience and aggression, he is now in many cases exchanging them for an appreciation of even the piecemeal integrity of his puppets, which start to look more like men. Of course, there will always be a place for genuinely nasty satire, but nastiness can quickly become a dead end for a serious artist, generating more heat than light, and with irony and ridicule becoming exoteric mass phenomena anyway in this age of debunk, the satirist has had really no place to go except in the

direction of character development, which hitherto has hardly been a feature of his art. For Richler this has meant shifting from the position of the pop art Juvenal of The Incomparable Atuk and Cocksure, to the more complex and rewarding fiction of St. Urbain's Horseman, thereby moving from frustration to compassion, and from godlike judgment to confession.

CONCLUSION

It will be seen from this study that the evolution of satire in English-Canadian fiction is such that the satirist, figuratively speaking, has removed himself from the judicial bench of the proselytizer, to the prosecution's chair from which he urged the case against the romantic illusions of man in society, to the position of a counsel for the defence who admits the guilt but pleads normative absurdity as a mitigating circumstance.

As I have already noted, the historical shift in interest from the moral grounds of conduct to the psychology of consciousness has brought a corresponding shift in the way satire is written. This shift away from the traditional pose of objectivity has altered the satirist's assumed omniscience for the better, for as Kingsley Amis has stated, "The satirist's occupational disease is intellectualism, a detachment so poised that it slides into a withdrawn superiority."[1] Northrop Frye has suggested that this disease is more conspicuous by its absence in Canadian authors: "[The] razor's edge of detachment is naturally rare in Canadian writing . . . but as the twentieth century advances and Canadian society takes a firmer grip of its environment, it becomes easier to assume the role of an individual separated in standards and attitudes from the community."[2]

This razor's edge of detachment from society, as

satirists, whose vocation it has been to present detached perspectives on society. Of course, their detachment is selectively limited rather than nihilistic, for the satirist contrasts observed behaviour with a rationality, an implicit good society, of which he may seem to be the only member. McCulloch's satiric persona Mephibosheth Stepsure is detached from society chiefly on the grounds of religious prudence, his eyes are deflected upward from the sins of his earthly brethren as he piously contrasts what he sees with his spiritual ideals, though we may also suspect him of inherent anti-sociability when he says something like "I was no visitor myself, and few came to see me. Here was a large saving of time and expense."[3] Haliburton and De Mille were only slightly less detached because they also operated on a philosophical level, Haliburton's philosophy residing in economic but not constitutional progress, De Mille's in taking the position of devil's advocate vis-a-vis Victorian concepts of death and the nature of man.

Frye writes: "The question that arises is: once society, along with physical nature, becomes external to the writer, what does he then feel a part of?"[4] This question becomes increasingly pertinent as one follows the course of satire, but it is not easily answered; it would be far easier to list what the writers do not feel a part of. It is increasingly less clear, even between McCulloch and De Mille, just what the satirist is affiliated with. The best one can

say about the anti-romantic group is that they stand for individuality, common sense, and some of the virtues of the past, and that they oppose hypocrisy and the levelling tendency of modern life. They are not completely at odds with society, they would simply like to keep it at bay. In the most recent phase of satire, attachment and detachment are less distinct, as the idea of social progress is seen less as a conspiracy than as a joke. The conspirators, if there are any, are equally the victims -- as witness Richler's many rich uncles, who are all jokes. The absurdity of life lived in the absence of authentic norms is the message of a writer like Richler. As Robert Scholes has written,

> These writers reflect quite properly their heritage from the esthetic movement of the nineteenth century and the ethical relativism of the twentieth. They have some faith in art but they reject all ethical absolutes. Especially, they reject the traditional satirist's faith in the efficacy of satire as a reforming instrument. They have a more subtle faith in the humanizing value of laughter. Whatever changes they hope to work in their readers are the admittedly evanescent changes inspired by art, which need to be continually renewed, rather than the dramatic renunciations of vice and folly postulated by traditional satire.[5]

The modern satirist, to paraphrase Leacock, has flung himself upon his horse and ridden off in all directions at once -- as did Richler with St. Urbain's Horseman. St. Urbain's Horseman is a successful modern satiric novel because Richler is able to resolve the problem of balance between satirical distance and novelistic identity. He does so with techniques borrowed from film which allow different perspectives to exist simultaneously through intercutting, and

presents concepts through montages of images.

It should now be obvious on a *prima facie* basis that satire is an important part of the Canadian literary quilt. But it should not come as a surprise. Canadians are always being prodded by someone -- usually one of our own -- to more fully appreciate our physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual squalor. The American critic Edmund Wilson, a kind of latter-day Sam Slick with neither the charm nor engaging dialects of the original, once took a busman's holiday to our literary capitals and produced a volume entitled *O Canada* wherein, after gazing like stout Cortes upon virgin wilderness, he asks, "How can one get a hold on such a country?", explaining that it lends itself neither to painting, music nor literature.[6] Later, in the course of delivering himself of the opinion that Canadian poets sound merely undergraduate when they are trying to be satirical, he ventures that "You have to be bitter for this kind of thing, and it is difficult for an English Canadian to find anything to be bitter about."[7] This would be encouraging indeed were it not for the facts of life, but any speculation that the late Mr. Wilson can claim to have excited bitterness among us, as Haliburton was fond of claiming that he had awakened his Nova Scotian brethren from their torpidity, would be at best ungracious.

With this in mind it may be revealing to look, in a general way, at the things that have agitated our major satirists. Chief among them are puritanism and hypocrisy;

hypocrisy is generally clear enough, but puritanism is a more difficult target. It is the most insidious form of anti-vitalism because it has a degree of usefulness insomuch as pure vitalism is bestiality. For this reason, the most comprehensive attack of puritanism in this study was in De Mille's Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder, where by extending certain Victorian attitudes regarding such things as war, death and religious observance, he achieved grotesque distortions that revealed unquestioned tendencies toward morbidity in the society.

Satire is a Dionysian force, constantly striving to expose and eradicate the mechanical and inhuman, and it is essentially conservative in the sense of striving to protect and renew vital energies. This has been its true function back as far as the magical, apotropaic rituals of satire's preliterary origins, as described in R. C. Elliott's The Power of Satire. Therein Elliott has shown how the ritual verbal "flyting" of aggressions was condoned as an outlet for the frustrations of primitive civilization and its restraints. A similar case for the benificence of verbal or written aggressions was put forth by Sigmund Freud in his Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious: "Brutal hostility, forbidden by law, has been replaced by verbal invective."[8]

With the exception of "Holy Willies" like Stepsure, satire has been opposed to puritanism, as to all social forces of restraint. In Canadian life, this has been

expressed in terms of the frontier; as W. L. Morton has noted, the

> alternate penetration of the wilderness and return of civilization is the basic rhythm of Canadian life, and forms the basic element of Canadian character whether French or English, the restraint necessary to preserve civilization from the wilderness violence, and the puritanism which is the offspring of the wedding of violence to restraint.[9]

Satire, in its alliance of humour and invective, has a fundamental antipathy toward puritanism, for as E. K. Brown maintained, "To popularize orthodox morality and to provide light, clean fun -- that is the very limit of what the arts can be allowed to do without alarming the Puritan mind. For the Puritan a life devoted to one of the arts is a life misused: the esthetic life is not a form of the good life."[10] By its very nature, its deliberate distance, satire has traditionally had an uneasy relationship with orthodoxy, perhaps because only orthodox fools generally have much power.

This wilderness/civilization tension finds its extremes, on the one hand, in the rough and ready frontier sensibility of McCulloch's evangelical Stepsure, and on the other in the claustrophobic Salterton of Robertson Davies, of whom one critic has commented, "Davies more than other Canadian writers manages to ignore the Great Outdoors."[11]

Stepsure is both a puritan and a satirist, but he follows a maverick tradition in satire, the counsel of prudence, which itself has served as a model for the parodies of such satirists as Rabelais and Swift. That these two

masters of invective were both churchmen by profession indicates how far from the mainstream Stepsure is, for it is inherent in most satirists to take the position of unfrocked priest. More recently, puritan restraint in the urban novels of Davies, Richler and Margaret Atwood (who also writes with an element of satire, especially in The Edible Woman) is a mask for the psychological tension produced in a complex base-land that has lost contact with its hinterland. The need to regain such contact is the subject of Robert Kroetsch's recent Gone Indian, which itself has an element of satire so refined and bereft of authorial heightening that it is purely juxta-positional and, on another level, it accounts for the theme of reaffiliation in expatriate writers, a theme best dealt with satirically in Richler's St. Urbain's Horseman.

Diametrically opposed to Edmund Wilson's myopic view that Canadian satire is a rara avis, is W. L. Morton's infinitely sager perception that it is inherent in the makeup of Canadian civilization.

> northern life is moral or puritanical, being so harsh that life can allow little laxity in convention. But the moral affords the substance and creates the disposition for satire. Canadian literature has been comparatively rich in satire, from the parody of Sam Slick's Yankee sharpness by a Tory loyalist to the extravaganzas on small town life of Stephen Leacock, or prairie rural life of Paul Hiebert. For satire feeds upon the gap between profession and performance, and the puritan both displays the gap more and sees it in other men's performance more readily than those of less rigid standards.[12]

Thus it is that the most popular targets in Canadian satire are teachers, religious and lawyers, because they all have a

basic and readily apparent professional function in society.

As expected, Canadian satire was found to be intimately related to society, whether the society was the almost pioneer village of the nineteenth century, the small-town protagonists of the early twentieth century, or the highly-urbanized life of postwar Montreal and Toronto. The spectrum of possibilities in what A. M. Clark once called "the art of articulate hate"[13] is broad, ranging from the infrared of invective to the ultraviolet of irony; however, in practise, the ironic end of the spectrum seems to provide the greater literary opportunities. Thus it is that Sam Slick is our one great hurler of invective, and one suspects that Haliburton was able to make him an oasis of invective in a desert of persiflage only because he cast Sam as a Yankee pedlar, since even puritans could not expect much couth from such a species. But it is as the ironist that Canadian satirists have chiefly functioned, the best example being Leacock, who was hailed by J. B. Priestley as "the essentially Canadian humorist, dry and droll, half-clown, half-satirist, whose irony reflects no anger, whose wit is sharp but leaves no sting."[14]

It may be seen through this study that the genre, satire, has been modified by the form, novel, in time and space. The greater the satirist's contemporaneity, in terms of the social ethos, the greater his sense of immersion in the present, the more greys tend to predominant over the

high contrast black and white portraits of the satirist who is able to remain aloof. It is easier to be satirical when the author or his persona is in some sense living in another time. Stepsure is philosophically an outsider from the past who tries to fit the wild young country into the religious mold of mother Britain. Sam Slick and Adam More are both literal outsiders in the societies where they are found, though they are concerned with orienting them toward the future rather than the past. The anti-romantics glory in being social and philosophical anachronisms: according to Desmond Pacey, Stephen Leacock "is, to put it briefly, a country squire of the eighteenth century who revolts against the acquisitiveness and arrogant commercialism of the early twentieth century"[15] -- and the others in my second phase achieve an equally necessary if less spectacular distance by retrospection. But for characters in modern satirical novels like Duddy Kravitz and Jake Hersh, who are placed in the Now, there is "no exit in time. The growth of cities and of technologically transmitted stimuli forbids us, in imagination if not in fact, the refuge of solitude or of vacuum."[16] There is a recognition that Now may be the wrong time and place, but there is no other.

In the works of proselytizing satire man is seen optimistically, for he is acting positively against the world. The anti-romantic group is to a degree pessimistic, in that they are conscious of being more acted upon than

acting, essentially fighting a rearguard action. For the absurdists[17] the mood is ambiguous and the action is acting and reacting, generally more of the latter.

As this Conclusion is being written, it is encouraging to read a critic who has perceived a similar tripartite distinction to the one I have made. Writing in Kansas Quarterly, Robert Murray Davis has divided the twentieth century satirical novel into three phases which correspond quite well to my own division, despite his restriction to the novel in the present century. His first phase, "the novel of ideas," can be exemplified by De Mille's Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder; his "externalist novel" corresponds to works of my second phase, including Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich, which is so "externalist" that it is not even a novel; his third phase is of course "modern absurdist comedy and satire," which I have exemplified with Richler.[18]

His explanation for the advent of this most recent satirical consciousness is cogent:

> As the growth of psychological knowledge gives us greater understanding of the complexity of human motivation, we become more and more aware that all behaviour, good and bad, aberrant and conformist, is to a considerable extent conditioned and to an even greater extent mixed, and therefore that praise and blame, though they are not impossible, can be less readily ascribed than in the past.[19]

Or, as one of Aldous Huxley's characters says in Antic Hay:

> "every man is ludicrous if you look at him from outside, without taking into account what's going on in his heart and mind. . . . It's a question of the point of view. Every one's a walking farce and a walking

> tragedy at the same time. The man who slips on a banana-skin and fractures his skull describes against the sky, as he falls, the most richly comical arabesques."[20]

Davis also touches on the important development wherein the reader is lead into sharing the condemnation, or at least the question of condemnation, as he has traditionally shared the judgment. He writes,

> writers of the third phase in the modern comic-satiric novel have begun to mock not just at aberrant behaviour or viciousness but at the fears and inadequacies common to modern man. The ego of reader and writer alike is now the object of assault, and this assault is all the more easily carried out because these writers have learned both from traditional and experimental novelists to use sensation and mental process to lure readers into identifying and feeling with their characters. . . . But that world is booby-trapped, and the complacency and superiority that the reader expected to share with writers of traditional comedy and satire are the major victims of those traps.[21]

William S. Burroughs, a writer who, whether he is one himself, has at least influenced modern satirists, has taken the idea of effecting the reader to a logical extreme. He was quoted as saying, "It's a question of getting a sufficient degree of precision. If I really knew how to write, I could write something that someone would read and it would kill them (sic)."[22]

It is doubtful if any of the writers I have considered would aspire to such power, but the point is made that the reader is now the target, and not an evil society from which he is implicitly excluded. In any event satirists still have some redoubtable weapons in their arsenal; the name for one of them, "sarcasm," comes from the Greek, meaning "flesh-tearing."

Having arrived at this mixed form, the satirical novel, the satirist may be pointed a way to avoid what Frye has called "the central dilemma of literature. If literature is didactic, it tends to injure its own integrity; if it ceases wholly to be didactic, it tends to injure is (sic) own seriousness." For as Frye further writes, "This dilemma is partly solved by giving an ironic resolution to a work of fiction. . . . Irony preserves the seriousness of literature by demanding an expanded perspective on the action it presents, but it preserves the integrity of literature by not limiting or prescribing for that perspective."[23] It has become, therefore, in the words of Karl Kraus, "prescriptions written by patients."[24]

In its evolution as I have traced it, English-Canadian satire can be considered a microcosm of the development of world satire in English. Certainly it seems to have implications for the appreciation of Canadian literature, for satire occupies at present a no-man's-land between the poles of wilderness survival and the fantasy of escape, and so has been ignored or mentioned obliquely by Canadian scholars, as if in embarrassment. Perhaps more knowledge of it will be unearthed before the reading public in the continuing archaeology of Canadian literature, for as Kingsley Amis has noted, "Satire offers a social and moral contribution. A culture without satire is a culture without self-criticism and thus, ultimately, without humanity."[25]

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1]F. R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith, eds., The Blasted Pine (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1967).

[2]Most of the historical data comes from Fred Cogswell, "Settlement in the Maritime Provinces (1720-1815)," in Literary History of Canada, ed. Carl F. Klinck et al., (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 71-83. Hereafter cited as LHC.

[3]LHC, p. 106.

[4]For biographical information I am indebted to William McCulloch, The Life of Thomas McCulloch (Truro, N. S.: The Albion, 1920).

[5]LHC, p. 92.

[6]William McCulloch, p. 60.

[7]LHC, p. 93.

[8]The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, ed. John D. Davis and Henry Snyder Gehman (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1944), p. 389.

[9]Thomas McCulloch, The Stepsure Letters (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1960), p. 57. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text.

[10]Maynard Mack claims that "All good satire . . . exhibits an appreciable degree of fictionality" in his "The Muse of Satire," Yale Review, 41, No. 1 (Sept. 1951), 84.

[11]Robertson Davies, A Voice from the Attic (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1972), p. 74.

[12]Frye makes this claim in his Introduction to The Stepsure Letters, p. v.

[13]

[14]William McCulloch, p. 73.

[15]Frye, p. ix.

[16]Frye, p. ix.

[17]Ezra Pound, Literary Essays (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 45.

[18]Thomas Haliburton, Sam Slick the Clockmaker, 2nd series (Toronto: The Musson Book Co. Ltd., n. d.), p. 131. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as C2.

[19]V. L. O. Chittick, Thomas Chandler Haliburton (New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 351. I am indebted to this study for most of my biographical information on Haliburton.

[20]Chittick, p. 355.

[21]Chittick, p. 95.

[22]J. D. Logan, Thomas Chandler Haliburton (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1923), p. 95.

[23]Matthew Hodgart, Satire (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969), p. 7.

[24]Robert L. McDougall, ed., Our Living Tradition, 2nd and 3rd series (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, n. d.), p. 7.

[25]R. P. Baker, A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1920), pp. 73-4.

[26]Baker, p. 74.

[27]J. D. Logan and Donald G. French, Highways of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1924), p. 58.

[28]Baker, p. 63.

[29]Haliburton, The Clockmaker (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1958), p. 13. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as C.

[30]A. H. O'Brien, Haliburton ("Sam Slick"), 2nd ed. (Montreal: Gazette Printing Co., 1909), p. 5.

[31]Chittick, pp. 129-167.

[32]Thomas McCulloch, p. 129.

[33]Chittick, p. 345.

[34]L. A. A. Harding, "Folk Language in Haliburton's Humour," Canadian Literature, 24 (Spring, 1965), 46.

[35]Logan, p. 132.

[36]Logan, p. 133.

[37]Haliburton, The Attache (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, n. d.), p. 14.

[38]William Walsh, Commonwealth Literature (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 69.

[39]McDougall, p. 35.

[40]S. B. Liljegren, Canadian History and Thomas Chandler Haliburton, II, (Upsala, Sweden: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1969), p. 15.

[41]Chittick, p. 180.

[42]LHC, p. 125.

[43]Haliburton, The Attache, p. 34.

[46]E. A. Baker, Introduction to Sam Slick the Clockmaker, (London: Routledge, 1904), p. xi.

[47]Logan, p. 97.

[48]Logan, p. 142.

[49]McDougall, p. 14.

[50]Haliburton, The Attache, p. 11.

[51]See Chittick, p. 455.

[52]Chittick, p. 476.

[53]Chittick, p. 585.

[54]Chittick, p. 606.

[55]Logan, The Canadian Magazine, 57 (Sept. 1921), 368.

[56]Ibid., 367.

[57]Stephen Leacock, Further Foolishness (New York: John Lane, 1916), p. 221.

[58]McDougall, p. 19.

[59]LHC, p. 105.

[60]I am indebted for this biographical information to Archibald MacMechan, "De Mille, the Man and the Writer," The Canadian Magazine, 27 (Sept. 1906), 404-16.

[61]Michael Gnarowski, A Concise Bibliography of English-Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973), p. 32.

[62]James De Mille, A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969), p. 70. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text.

[63]Robert Burns, The Complete Works and Letters, introd. William Harvey (London: British Books Ltd., n. d.), p. 54.

[64]George Woodcock, "De Mille and the Utopian Vision," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 2, No. 3 (Summer 1973), 175.

[65]R. E. Watters, Introduction to A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder, p. ix.

[66]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 229.

[67]Woodcock, p. 175.

[68]MacMechan, p. 404.

[69]Woodcock, p. 175.

[70]Woodcock, "An Absence of Utopias," Canadian Literature, 42 (Autumn 1969), 4.

[71]M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), p. 177.

[72]Frye, p. 232.

[73]LHC, p. 114.

[74]Woodcock, Journal of Canadian Fiction, p. 174.

[75]Frye, p. 309.

[76]Frye, p. 310.

[77]Frye, p. 226.

[78]Frye, p. 227.

[79]Frye, p. 226.

[80]Frye, p. 229.

[81]Frye, p. 229.

[82]Frye, p. 229.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1]Robert M. Hamilton, ed., Canadian Quotations and Phrases (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1965), p. 228.

[2]F. W. Watt, "Critic or Entertainer: Leacock and the Growth of Materialism," Canadian Literature, 5 (Summer 1960), 33.

[3]Hamilton, p. 34.

[4]For biographical information on Leacock I am indebted chiefly to Ralph Curry, Stephen Leacock: Humorist and Humanist (Garden City and New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959).

[5]Stephen Leacock, Preface to Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970), p. xiv. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as SS.

[6]Donald Cameron, Faces of Leacock (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 102.

[7]Quoted in Curry, p. 199.

[8]Leacock, Humour and Humanity (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), p. 3.

[9]Desmond Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 114.

[10]Pacey, p. 113.

[11]Cameron, pp. 36-7.

[12]Robertson Davies, Stephen Leacock (Toronto and Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970), p. 22.

[13]Leacock, Humour and Humanity, p. 211.

[14]Curry, p. 250.

[15]Curry, p. 242.

[16]Cameron, p. 37.

[17]Cameron, p. 128.

[18]Curry, p. 97.

[19]Cameron, p. 105.

[20]Curry, p. 98.

[21]Curry, p. 78.

[22]Leacock, The Social Criticism of Stephen Leacock, ed. and introd. Alan Bowker (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 76.

[23]Curry, pp. 245-6.

[24]Cameron, p. 5.

[25]J. K. Feibleman, In Praise of Comedy (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p. 138.

[26]Davies, p. 55.

[27]Leacock, Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969), p. 1. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as AA.

[28]Quoted in Donald M. Goodfellow, "H. L. Mencken: Scourge of Philistines," in Six Satirists (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1965), p. 99.

[29]Quoted in David Worcester, The Art of Satire (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1940), p. 15.

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[31]Priestley, p. 11.

[32]Quoted in Peter McArthur, Stephen Leacock (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1923), p. 151.

[33]Cameron, p. 108.

[34]James Nichols, Insinuation (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), p. 27.

[35]Nichols, p. 13.

[36]Cameron, "Stephen Leacock: The Boy Behind the Arras," Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 3 (July 1967), 14.

[37]Davies, p. 29.

[38]Claude T. Bissell, "Haliburton, Leacock and the American Humorous Tradition," Canadian Literature, 39 (Winter 1969), 8.

[39]Bissell, p. 11.

[40]Logan and French, Highways of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1924), p. 323.

[41]Cameron, Faces of Leacock, p. 120.

[42]Leacock, Humour and Humanity, p. 76.

[43]Cameron, Journal of Commonwealth Literature, p. 3.

[44]"The Art of Fiction XXXI," Paris Review, 8, No. 30 (1962), 164.

[45]Cameron, Faces of Leacock, p. 119.

[46]Ibid., p. 120.

[47]Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 223.

[48]Paul Hiebert, Sarah Binks (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971), p. xv. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text.

[49]Quoted in Edward A. McCourt, The Canadian West in Fiction, rev. ed. (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1970), p. 19.

[50]McCourt, p. 22.

[51]McCourt, p. 14.

[52]Edith Fowke, rev. of Sarah Binks, Canadian Forum, 27 (1947), 284.

[53]Stephen Leacock, Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy, introd. Robertson Davies (Toronto and Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969), pp. 69-75.

[54]LHC, p. 720.

[55]A. L. Wheeler, Introduction to Sarah Binks, p. ix. The only other critical article I have been able to find on Hiebert's book, besides reviews, is by the same author: A. L. Wheeler, "Up From the Magma and Back Again with Paul Hiebert," Manitoba Arts Review, 6, No. 1 (Spring 1948), 3-14.

[56]See D. J. Dooley, "The Satiric Novel in Canada Today: A Failure Too Frequent?", Queen's Quarterly, 64 (1958), 584-5.

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[58]Birney, Turvey (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1963)., p. 19. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text.

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[61]Bissell, rev. of Turvey, University of Toronto Quarterly, 19 (April 1950), 276.

[62]Frank Davey, Earle Birney (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1971), p. 30.

[63]B. K. Sandwell, rev. of Turvey, Saturday Night, 64 (September 1949), 17.

[64]Birney, "Creativity Through Fiction," The Creative Writer (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1966), rpt. in Nesbitt, ed., p. 81.

[65]Davey, p. 31.

[66]Birney, "Creativity Through Fiction," p. 81.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Birney, "Turvey and the Critics," p. 92.

[69]Bissell, p. 276.

[70]LHC, p. 716.

[71]Malcolm Lowry, rev. of Turvey, Thunderbird (December 1949), rpt. in Nesbitt, ed., p. 73.

[72]Simon Paynter, rev. of The Diary of Samuel Marchbanks by Robertson Davies, Canadian Forum, 27 (March 1948), 284.

[73]Robertson Davies, The Diary of Samuel Marchbanks (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1966), p. 105. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as D. Likewise for references to other works by the same author: Samuel Marchbanks' Almanack (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1968), cited as A; The Table-Talk of Samuel Marchbanks (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1949), cited as T; Tempest-tost (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1965), cited as TT; Leaven of Malice (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1964), cited as LM; and for A Mixture of Frailties (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973), cited as MF.

[74]Hugo McPherson, "The Mask of Satire," Canadian Literature, 4 (Spring 1960), rpt. in McPherson, ed., Masks of Fiction (Toronto and Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969), p. 163.

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[76]Simon Paynter, rev. of Tempest-tost, Canadian Forum, 31 (November 1951), 187-8.

[77]McPherson, p. 168.

[78]Quoted in Colombo's Canadian Quotations, ed. J. R. Colombo (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1974), p. 29.

[79]Karl Kraus, Satire Newsletter, 5, No. 1 (Spring 1967), 67.

[80]McPherson, p. 163.

[81]George Meredith, "An Essay on Comedy," in Comedy, introd. Wylie Sypher (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., n. d.), p. 36.

[82]Ivon Owen, "The Salterton Novels," Tamarack Review, 9 (Autumn 1958), 63.

[83]Quoted in Charles A. Allen and George D. Stephens, eds., Satire: Theory and Practice (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1966), p. 11.

[84]Leacock, Humour and Humanity, p. 76.

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[2]Marjorie Ryan, "Four Contemporary Satires and the Problem of Norms," Satire Newsletter, 6, No. 2 (1969), 46.

[3]Mordecai Richler, Son of a Smaller Hero (New York: Paperback Library, Inc., 1968), p. 13. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as SSH.

[4]Richler, A Choice of Enemies (London: Andre Deutsch, 1957), pp. 10-11. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as ACE.

[5]See Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, p. 266.

[6]Ellen Leyburn, Satire Newsletter, 2, No. 2 (1964), 10.

[7]Marshal McLuhan, The Mechanical Bride (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1951), p. v.

[8]McLuhan, p. 21.

[9]Woodcock, p. 44.

[10]Richler, The Incomparable Atuk (Toronto and Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1965), p. 25. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as IA.

[11]John Carroll, rev. of The Incomparable Atuk, Tamarack Review, 29 (Autumn 1963), 100.

[12]Donald Cameron, "Mordecai Richler: The Reticent Moralist," in Conversations with Canadian Novelists (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973), p. 119.

[13]John Metcalf, "Black Humour: An Interview With Mordecai Richler," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3, No. 1 (Winter 1974), 74.

[14]F. W. Watt, "Letters in Canada," University of Toronto Quarterly, 33 (July 1964), 390.

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[17]See Woodcock, p. 45.

[18]Quoted in Randall Reid, The Fiction of Nathanael West (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 11.

[19]Quoted in Daniel Aaron, "'The Truly Monstrous': A Note on Nathanael West," Partisan Review, 14 (February 1947), 99.

[20]Metcalf, p. 73.

[21]Pacey, rev. of Cocksure, Fiddlehead, 76 (Summer 1968), 88.

[22]Richler, Cocksure (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 211. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as C.

[23]Metcalf, p. 75.

[24]Eli Mandel, rev. of The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz by Mordecai Richler, Queen's Quarterly, 67 (Spring 1960), 130.

[25]Don Bell, Saturday Night at the Bagel Factory (Richmond Hill, Ont.: Simon & Shuster of Canada, Ltd., 1974), p. 100.

[26]Richler, The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), p. 8. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as ADK.

[27]W. H. New, "The Apprenticeship of Discovery," Mordecai Richler, ed. G. David Sheps (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1971), p. 70.

[28]Woodcock, p. 43.

[29]Kildare Dobbs, rev. of The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, Tamarack Review, 13 (Autumn 1959), 134.

[30]Mandel, p. 130.

[31]Mandel, p. 130.

[32]Robert Fulford, rev. of St. Urbain's Horseman by Mordecai Richler, Saturday Night, 86 (July 1971), 25.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman (Toronto: Bantam Books of Canada Ltd., 1972), p. 31. Further references to this book in this chapter are in parentheses in my text, cited as SUH.

[35]Fulford, p. 25.

[36]Michael Gordon, "On St. Urbain's Horseman," Atlantic Advocate, 62 (Sept. 1971), 51.

[37]Audrey Thomas, rev. of St. Urbain's Horseman, Canadian Literature, 51 (Winter 1972), 84.

[38]Cameron, p. 116.

[39]G. David Sheps, "The Novels of Mordecai Richler: An Interpretation," in Mordecai Richler, ed. G. David Sheps, p. xii.

[40]Sheps, p. xv.

[41]Cameron, p. 116.

[42]Tallman, rev. of St. Urbain's Horseman, Canadian Literature, 56 (Summer 1973), 77.

[43]Leyburn, p. 11.

[44]Earl Rovit, Satire Newsletter, 6, No. 2, 17.

NOTES ON CONCLUSION

[1]Kingsley Amis, "Laughter's To Be Taken Seriously," New York Times Book Review, 7 July 1957, p. 19.

[2]Frye, "Conclusion," LHC, p. 839.

[3]McCulloch, The Stepsure Letters, p. 74.

[4]Frye, p. 839.

[5]Robert Scholes, The Fabulators (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 41.

[6]Edmund Wilson, O Canada, The Noonday Press (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), p. 58.

[7]Wilson, p. 92.

[8]Sigmund Freud, Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious, trans. and ed. by James Strachey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 102.

[9]Quoted in Mandel, Introduction to Contexts of Canadian Criticism, ed. Mandel (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 8.

[10]E. K. Brown, "Canadian Poetry," in Contexts of Canadian Criticism, p. 44.

[11]Hilda Kirkwood, rev. of Leaven of Malice, Canadian Forum, 34 (January 1955), 238.

[12]W. L. Morton, "The Relevance of Canadian History," in Mandel ed., p. 67.

[13]A. M. Clark, Studies in Literary Modes (Edinburgh and London: Oliverand Boyd, 1946), p. 40.

[14]The Bodley Head Leacock, ed. and introd. by J. B. Priestley (London: Bodley Head, 1957), p. 12.

[15]Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, rev. ed. (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 109.

[16]Robert Murray Davis, "The Comic-Satiric Novel in the Twentieth Century," Kansas Quarterly, 1, No. 3 (Summer 1969), 12-3.

[17]It may be questioned why I have used the plural term "Absurdists" when only Mordecai Richler is being discussed. I do so because Richler is representative of others who share similar characteristics as satirists. I intended to consider two more books by two additional authors in my third phase, but since Richler is the best example, because his work has the greatest satiric range in this study, anyone discussed following him would be anti-climactic. In any case the object of the study is not to be exhaustive but to indicate major themes and approaches.

[18]Davis, p. 7.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Aldous Huxley, Antic Hay, introd. Lewis Gannett (New York: The Modern Library, 1933), p. 294.

[21]Davis, p. 13.

[22]Interviewed in Rolling Stone, 11 May 1972, p. 49.

[23]Frye, "The Road of Excess," in Mandel, ed., p. 49.

[24]Kraus, p. 69.

[25]Amis, p. 19.

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